the weekly Standard

OCTOBER 30, 2000

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THE REAL BUSH ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD
CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH & STEVEN HAYWARD

REUEL MARC GERECHT • TOM DONNELLY

America at War

What the attack on the USS Cole tells us

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Contents

October 30, 2000 • Volume 6, Number 7

2 Scrapbook.... *A disgraceful State Dept. memo and more.*

4 Casual... *David Brooks, serious about the Subway Series.*

6 Correspondence..... *On public schools, etc.*

9 Editorial ..... *The Clinton Referendum*

Articles

11 America at War *What the attack on the USS* Cole *tells us*..... BY TOM DONNELLY

12 The U.N. Also Rises *American power and Israeli security may never be the same*..... BY JOHN R. BOLTON

14 Black October *The unreported attacks against the Jews of France*..... BY MICHEL GURFINKIEL

17 The Gentlewoman From Florida *Corrine Brown should have faced an easy reelection*..... BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

20 Don't Rock the Vote *There's a good reason Bush and Gore aren't panting after the "youth vote."* .... BY EDMUND WALSH

22 Arabs, Poles, and Other Key Voters *Ethnic "outreach" could decide who wins the election*..... BY MATTHEW REES

24 Hate-Crime Laws: What's Not to Like *For starters, they are bad public policy*..... BY JACKSON TOBY

Cover: AP / Wide World

Features

26 G-Men, East of Suez

A serious anti-terrorism policy would unleash the military..... BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

29 Smoke and Smearers

The truth about the Bush environmental record... BY CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH & STEVEN HAYWARD

Books & Arts

33 It Was the Sex, Stupid *Why the American people excused Clinton*..... BY DAVID TELL

35 The Moralist's Gamble *Can character be based on self-interest?*..... BY JONATHAN MARKS

36 Racing in Place *John McWhorter issues a strong challenge to black America*..... BY ROGER CLEGG

38 Bad Ideas Matter Most *Heather Mac Donald's account of how intellectuals have damaged America*... BY PETER SAVODNIK

39 Never A Contender *Just another liberal movie*..... BY JOHN PODHORETZ

40 Parody..... Undecided Voter, *the magazine.*

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The State Department's Disgraceful Memo

Last Monday, Oct. 16, a stunning memo arrived at the Voice of America. Officials at the State Department had decided that a VOA editorial condemning the terrorist attack on the USS *Cole* should not be broadcast to foreign countries. "This editorial will reach an audience that is caught up in the violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories," the memo explained. "The 17 or so dead sailers [sic] does not compare to the 100+ Palestinians who have died in recent weeks where we have remained silent. The people that hear this will not see the separation we are trying to make and relate it directly to the violence."

In other words, as long as Palestinians are dying, the United States has no right to complain about the murder of its own citizens by terrorists. That, apparently, was the official view of the Department of State. VOA held the editorial. And that's where things stood, until the memo was leaked late the following day.

Then this magazine's editor read the memo on Fox News. It was posted by Matt Drudge on his eponymous website, as well as on *weeklystandard.com* and other sites. On Wednesday morning, naval officers arriving for work at the Pentagon read about it on the Drudge Report. Outraged, several of them called Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, who promptly drafted a letter to Madeleine Albright demanding an explanation. (Two of the sailors injured in the *Cole* bombing are from Alabama.) Just as promptly, the State Department issued a statement disavowing its own memo. The memo, a spokesman declared, was "wrong" and in no way a reflection of U.S. policy. By the end of the day, the editorial had been broadcast.

All set now? Not so fast. Several questions remain, beginning with, How did this happen? At a briefing on Wednesday, State Department deputy spokesman Philip Reeker tried to explain. Reeker repeated the now-official position that the memo had not been "cleared" by the "appropriate" authorities. Wait a minute, said a reporter, "this specific memo, if it wasn't cleared, how did it get on official State Department stationery with people's phone numbers?" "Right," said Reeker, "I was just getting to that."

But he didn't. Instead, Reeker launched into an eye-glazing account of bureaucratic protocol at the State Department. He followed with something vague about "this age of e-mail," in which "text can be moved so quickly." And that was about all he said. He never answered the question. Nor did he reveal who wrote—or e-mailed or moved the text of—the memo. "I don't think that needs to be an issue that we need to get into," Reeker said, in a brush-off that was brazen even by the standards of Clinton administration flacks. "This is not a question of pointing to somebody."

Oh, but it should be. The fact remains that someone at the State Department with significant enough authority to write such a memo wrote such a memo. That person should probably be fired on grammatical grounds alone, judging from the tortured wording and odd spelling. And there is evidence that more than one person was involved, that the memo was not simply, as Reeker put it, a "glitch." At the bottom of the document is a line stating that the State Department's counterterrorism staff (S/CT) "concurred with this." At the briefing Reeker was asked repeatedly if this was true. He never denied it.

In some ways, the State Department's defense of itself is valid. No one believes the memo reflects official U.S. policy, or that most American diplomats would agree with it. There are serious people at the State Department. But there are also people there with destructive, un-American attitudes—people who would write a memo like this, and others who would let it out of the building. THE SCRAPBOOK, alas, has not yet been granted subpoena power. But Congress has. Let's find out whodunnit. ♦

S/S-IA

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Office of Policy

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9-619-1043

From:
Sandra Sarkis
Interagency Coordinator
S/S-IA

Telephone Number:
202-647-6545

Message/Instructions

The Department of State does not clear on the referenced VOA editorial.

This editorial will reach an audience that is caught up in the violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The 17 or so dead sailers does not compare to the 100 + Palestinians who have died in recent weeks where we have remained silent. The people that hear this will not see the separation we are trying to make and relate it directly to the violence.

Either VOA adds something in there to take the edge off and mention the Palestinians or we should kill this editorial until the violence has calmed for a while.

S/CT concurred with this. If you have questions concerning this editorial, please contact NEA/P [redacted]

Thanks.

Subject:
VOA EDITORIAL: TERRORISM WILL FAIL

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The Wit of George W. Bush

Those who know him well keep insisting George W. Bush has a wry sense of humor. The rest of us sometimes wonder if wry is code for paltry. But Bush got a lot of laughs at last week's annual Alfred E. Smith dinner in New York. For those who missed it, here are a few of the better Bush lines:

• "I ran into this woman coming off the elevator. She said a white tie is fine but you need some more earth tones. Nice woman, I think her name was Naomi. The odd thing was, she handed me a bill for $15,000. A grown man paying $15,000 for someone to tell you what to wear? Heck, $15,000 these days gets you a sleepover in the Lincoln bedroom."

• "There really is no place like New York, especially for baseball fans like me and Mrs. Clinton. It's a town with so many outstanding major-leaguers . . . Derek Jeter, Mike Piazza, Adam Clymer."

• "I actually have a lot of respect for the New York media, even the *New York Times*. I like a newspaper that's predictable. When I was a couple of points down, they said my campaign was in crisis. When it was a little bit up, they said we were neck-and-neck. . . . I can imagine the headline if I win: 'Gore Wins New York City, Setbacks Elsewhere.'"

Ba-dump-bump! ♦

Carly Simon, Eat Your Heart Out

Inspired by the news that Carly Simon had written a song "testifying" to the virtues of Hillary Clinton, THE SCRAPBOOK a few weeks ago invited readers to share their own Carly Simonesque lyrical gifts. They certainly stand up against Simon's own paean to the Senate candidate: "You are so full of grace; You'll surely win this race."

Our favorite came from Mike Antonucci and is either pro-Hillary or a subtle parody of the pro-Hillary camp. Either way, he gets extra points for the *Godfather* reference.

(To the tune of "Nobody Does It Better")

No white male doesn't hate her, Ken Starr is such a pest
No white male doesn't take a crack at you, Hill'ry you're the best
Upstate you went listening, and in New York City
You didn't hide from the Far Right.
Rudy Giuliani, like that guy Luca Brasi
Is sleeping with the fishes there tonight.

There were numerous variations on Simon's anti-egomania anthem, "You're So Vain." We especially liked Larry Eubank's couplet:

You're so vain,
You probably think you're Madame Ceaucescu.

And Matt Philbin's:

So much brains,
These scandals are never about you.

Honorable mention to Edward Himmelfarb, Mike Daven, Dianne Himler, Doug Cogan, Doug Jordan, and the Rev. James Barker. The rest of you should be glad you have a day job. ♦

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Casual

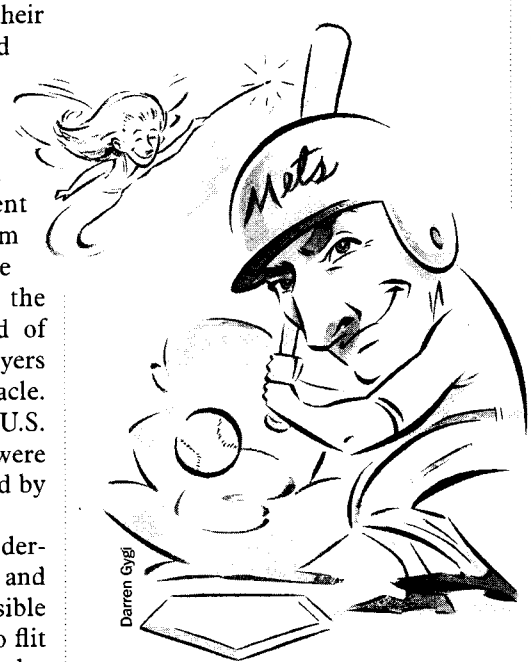
Tinkerbell in Six

I hope Americans will take advantage of the Subway Series to overcome their narrow prejudices and recognize that not all New Yorkers are abrasive, arrogant jerks—that only the Yankees fans are like that. For we are all formed by the things we love, and to be a Yankees fan—as to be a Cowboys fan in football—is to be in love with dominance and success. Yankees fans swagger so much when they walk that sometimes their gold chains get tangled in their back hair so that when they go off to visit their parole officers they are cranky and short-tempered.

But to be a Mets fan, on the other hand, is to be in love with the magic of spring. It is to be in love with youthful joy, innocent hope, and the promise of warm tomorrows. The meaning of the New York Mets was formed in the summer of 1969, when a band of young and utterly carefree players performed their famous miracle. Those Mets were like the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team. They were exuberant boys, somehow touched by grace, who beat professional men.

So to be a Mets fan is to understand that the universe is a warm and wonderful place, filled with invisible angels and sprites and fairies who flit about amongst us doing good works. In 1986, a dancing fairy came down to guide that ball through Bill Buckner's legs. Last year a mischievous sprite lifted Robin Ventura's home run over the wall for a Grand Slam single, launching the Mets to victory in a 15-inning game against the Atlanta Braves. Over the past two postseasons, the Mets have won an amazing seven games in their final at bat, each one a reminder of the happy spirits who sprinkle their pixie dust at just the right moments.

Mets fans appreciate good players, like Tom Seaver and Mike Piazza, but their special love is reserved for those who have been touched by the magic. Every time the Mets make a postseason run, there will be one Golden Child among them, whose talents are simply inexplicable by ordinary means. The Golden Child always emerges out of nowhere. He is serene while others quake and choke. He is wise, while others are confused. He is pure, while others are scarred. This year the Golden Child is named Timo Perez. Last year, it was Melvin Mora.



Neither of these rookies was even on the Mets for much of the regular season. But in September the wand descended, and for a few weeks they were otherworldly.

In fact, the amazing come-from-behind victories are not even the best part of being a Mets fan. The best part is thinking you have spotted another Golden Child and letting yourself dream of the glories that will surely come. In 1984, Dwight Gooden burst on the scene. His serenity and poise were incredible. The rules of earthly existence did not seem to apply. Like most Mets fans, I suspect, I got more pleasure out of watching him play that year, when he was a revelation but the Mets did not make the playoffs, than I did watching him in 1986, when he was just an ordinary superstar and they did.

Not all these golden lads pan out. Earlier this season, the Mets promoted an outfielder named Jason Tyner who seemed to have the glow, but he was traded. Several years ago, a young, amazingly talented player named Gregg Jefferies burst on the scene with an efflorescent September. But Jefferies was not pure of heart, and now, alas, he is a journeyman player, just another jock. I have a whole list of players in my head who seemed at first blush to be poetry, but who turned out to be prose: Dave Magadan, Butch Huskey, Ryan Thompson, Parke Wilson, and so on.

The only Golden Child who has remained forever pure is Sidd Finch. Finch was an ethereal young Buddhist monk who could throw a baseball 168 miles per hour, and who had learned his craft while in India as a novice, throwing rocks at snow tigers who were threatening the yak pens. He was the subject of a long story in *Sports Illustrated*, and as I read that story, written by George Plimpton, I knew that it was an April Fools' joke. There was no Sidd Finch. But it hit all the New York Mets notes—youth, innocence, purity, divine intervention—so that he felt real, and I still think back on his career with incredible fondness.

So when you look at the crowds at Shea Stadium this week, remember that these people are New Yorkers only on the outside. Inside, they are fanciful children, who believe in fairy godmothers and magic (even Jerry Seinfeld). I write this before the series has started, but I know that at some point Timo Perez—or Joe McEwing, another young man with classic Golden Child potential—will do something inexplicable, and the Mets, who don't have nearly as many good players as the Yankees, will still win this series. In six.

David Brooks

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The Pitfalls of Choice

Catherine Seipp's "Public School Confidential!" seems to make a case against the competition among schools that vouchers are expected to create (Oct. 16). She writes, "The various principals at my daughter's public school used to remind us whenever parents questioned anything too persistently, 'There's a waiting list this long of families who'd love to have a spot here.'" With parents lying about their home addresses or hoping to buy expensive homes in that school's district, it seems to me that competition was certainly in full force and had created a monster of snooty disdain and contemptuous superiority in school administrators.

As for sexual harassment and discipline issues, I don't know how any school, public or otherwise, could handle them so casually when we have seen the headlines about students receiving long, out-of-school suspensions for giving "drugs" like Tylenol to other students. And most people will remember that a couple of years ago a primary school boy was charged with harassment for kissing a girl in his class. In my area, a pair of elementary school boys were suspended for pointing their fingers at students' heads on the playground and shouting, "Bang, bang, you're dead."

As a teacher in New Jersey, a state at least as litigious as California, I am also well aware that waivers absolving schools of responsibility for mishaps on trips or at school functions do not absolve schools of liability for their clear legal obligations to take all reasonable precautions to care for the safety of students in their charge. I am also aware that no parent savvy enough to wheel and deal his kid into a "coveted" school is going to be put off by the flunkies who run it, especially when he perceives that some situation might affect his child adversely.

On the whole, my issue with vouchers is simple, perhaps even a cliché. I fear that people of the "middling sort" will have just enough money, combined with vouchers, to get their kid out of a school they don't like. However, lower income families will not be able to make up the monetary difference between the voucher and the tuition and will be stuck in schools increasingly populated by poorer students. Furthermore, these schools may lose significant tax support should voters pinched by private school tuitions vote down budgets for schools in which their children have no stake. Studies show that high parental socioeconomic levels, which tend to translate into highly active, knowledgeable, and effective school involvement, are the most salient contributor to high test scores and overall quality of education.

As a 37-year teaching veteran, having seen budgets defeated in my school district for more than 30 years, usually by senior citizens who also do not have a stake in schools, I know that a sudden influx of young families with children,

combined with the passing away of some politically influential seniors, has been responsible for a building program and several years of budget passage.

Informed, active parents, who know the power of a dollar, a vote, and an action committee, can be the prime actors in supporting those things that increase the quality of a school system.

Edwin J. Heck
South River, NJ

Live and Let Live

In his article on Ruth Dwyer's effort to "take back Vermont," Andrew Ferguson misses the irony in the current political battle ("Babe Ruth," Oct. 16). There is plenty to fault the Vermont leftists on, and Ferguson rightly mentions over-regulation of business and quackery in education.

But in regard to "civil unions," surely it is more in accord with the spirit of traditional Vermont Republican libertarianism to leave the choice of partners (whatever the unions may be called) up to individuals than it is to have government constrain that choice to members of the opposite gender.

Joe Willingham
Berkeley, CA

Macho Man Extras

I've just read David Tell's review of *The Starr Report Disrobed*, by Fedwa Malti-Douglas ("Politics As Fiction," Oct. 9). The review is exceedingly keen and wonderfully funny. It wins my hearty thanks and roars of laughter.

With some trepidation, I'd like to ask the editors to do me a favor: Would you please, when next you see him, give David Tell a hug for me?

Carl Cohen
Ann Arbor, MI

Despite my Democratic and heterosexual voting tendencies, because of your Oct. 9 cover ("Greatest Show on Earth"), I am voting Republican in the presidential election. Clearly, Bush's manly abs and lightly tufted pecs signify "leader" more than Gore's soft belly and flabby chest.

Matt Mathesius
Kennewick, WA

• • •

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the weekly Standard

The Clinton Referendum

There's a message in the trajectory of the presidential campaign. At the beginning of the year, George W. Bush held a solid lead over Al Gore. Then came the Republican primaries, and Bush, battered by John McCain's challenge, lost ground. Polls showed Bush had fallen into a tie with Gore. Over the summer little happened, and Bush regained a clear advantage. The GOP convention bolstered that advantage, momentarily. But Gore then soared after picking Joe Lieberman as his running mate, delivering a palpably liberal though well-received convention speech, and giving Tipper a smooch. Gore pulled even or slightly ahead of Bush. Over the past three weeks, the debates have turned Gore's credibility and manner into issues. Bush has jumped ahead again and now leads by a few points.

Two dips, followed each time by the reappearance of a Bush lead—that's the story. It means there is a natural state of this presidential race, a default position. Despite the fabulous economy, despite the unprecedented gains in the stock market, despite a wave of national contentment and the feeling by a majority of Americans that the country is headed in the right direction, the advantage in the race belongs to the challenger, the outsider, the agent of change—Bush.

The message is that, absent a large intervening event, the country is wary of voting for the representative of the incumbent party. Sure, Bush has had to demonstrate he's an acceptable alternative to Gore. He's done that with his conduct, speeches, and debate performances, and the contrast with Gore is stark on all these counts. Gore's bullying and contemptuous manner has made matters worse for him. His lurch to the left, starting with his convention speech last August in Los Angeles, has positioned him as more liberal than the country (which remains slightly right of center ideologically) and more liberal than President Clinton as well.

But style and substance aren't the heart of Gore's problem. Bill Clinton is. In times of peace and prosperity, the electorate ordinarily looks for continuity in picking a new president. Clinton has upset that pattern. His scandalous behavior has created a desire for change. Of course, Gore isn't directly responsible for Clinton's personal conduct, and no one has accused him of that. But his connection to Clinton runs deep. Not only was Gore a full partner in illegal fund-raising, but he also served, through his praise of Clinton and attacks on his critics, as an enabler of the president's worst excesses.

For many conservatives, Bush's unwillingness to voice fervent and specific moral objections to Clinton has been a point of contention. In the four nationally televised debates, neither Bush nor Dick Cheney mentioned impeachment even once. (Nor did Gore, Lieberman, or their interrogators.) Bush's only regular allusion to the Clinton scandals is a fuzzy promise to restore honor and dignity to the presidency. His aides insist that going after Clinton or stressing Gore's ties to Clinton would backfire, alienating moderate and swing voters. They're probably right about this. Millions of voters, outraged and depressed by the Clinton scandals, don't want to hear about them anymore.

But voters haven't forgotten. "There are indelible images in peoples' minds," a Bush adviser says. People remember what Clinton did, Gore's trip to the Buddhist temple, his phone calls, and his comments about being "proud" to stand with the president and believing Clinton will be viewed by historians as "one of America's greatest presidents." All these things, the Bush aide says, "are lurking out there." Bush has no need to mention them. On the contrary, he must show he is not consumed by hatred of Clinton, a passion voters find off-putting.

Bush has managed this reasonably well. In the debates, he repeated ad nauseam that he's from outside Washington. He promises to bring a new tone and way of doing business to Washington. He says he would sweep aside partisan bickering and inaugurate a new era of cooperation between Republicans and Democrats. A lot of this is naive campaign chatter that, at best, qualifies as wishful thinking. But it's wishful thinking shared by most Americans.

To overcome the Bush advantage, Gore desperately

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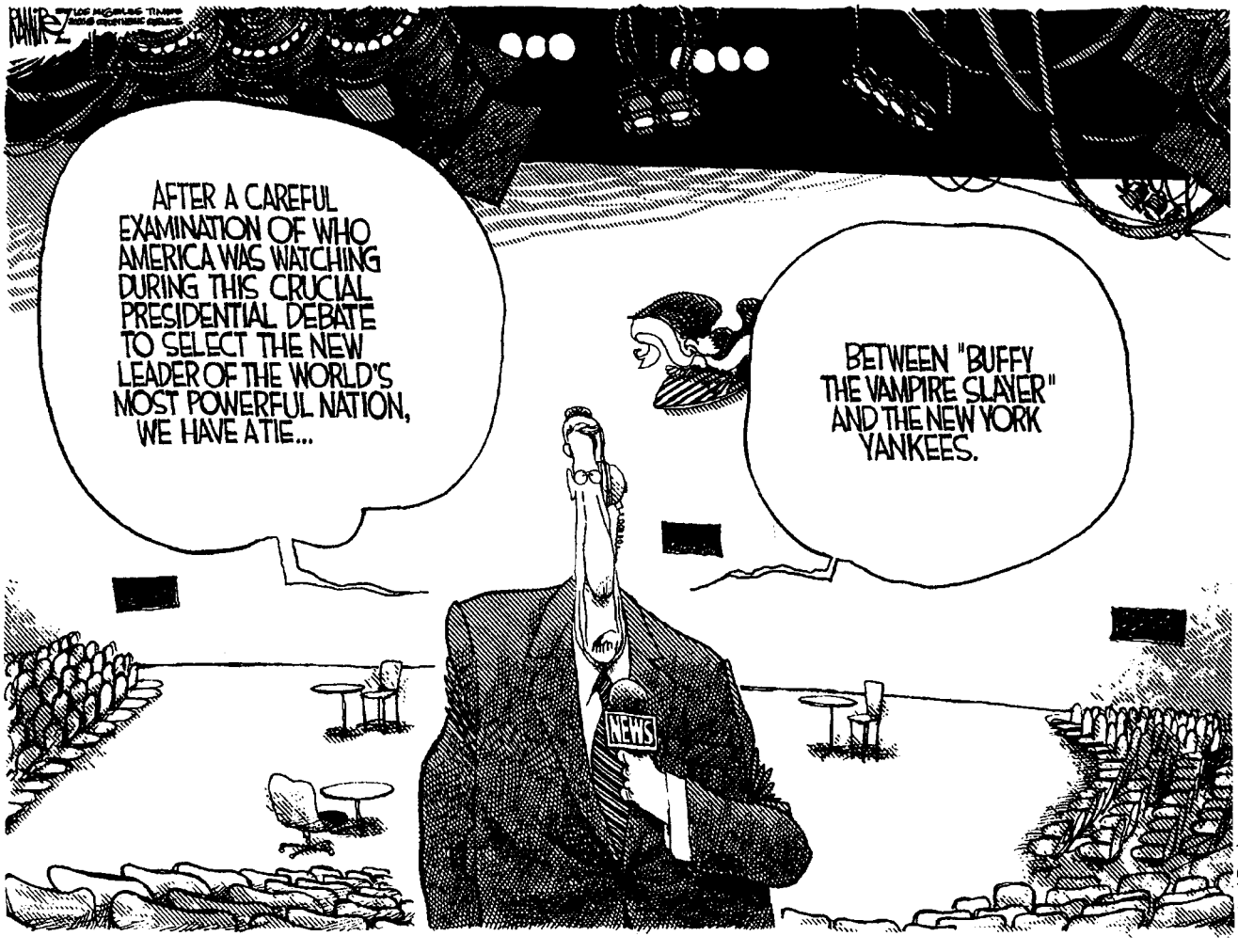
needs a big event or a dominant issue to emerge suddenly. More of the same isn't likely to alter the fundamental structure of the race. Yet more of the same appears to be Gore's strategy. He's relying especially on Social Security, the hardy perennial for Democrats late in a competitive campaign. It's worked in the past by scaring seniors that Republicans would take away their benefits, and it's conceivable it will work again. Probably not, though, since Bush has drummed up popular support for his Social Security reform, which would allow all wage earners to invest part of their payroll taxes in stocks, bonds, or mutual funds.

The last resort for Gore is Clinton. The president is itching to get involved. On his own initiative, he ridiculed Bush last week while addressing congressional Democrats. And he'll be campaigning with Democrats in the closing weeks of the campaign—though not with Gore under current plans. Clinton has already intruded in the race for his successor far more than most outgoing presidents, and he's done so in a particularly unpresidential way. An argument could be made that since Clinton is the source of Gore's trouble, his campaigning at the vice president's side would have a salutary effect, driving up turnout and serving as the hair of the dog that bit Gore. But this would clash with the central message of Gore's candidacy: that he's his "own man," not beholden to Clinton. Gore's sad fate is that he may not be electable with Clinton, or without him.

Conservatives have a right to congratulate themselves for Gore's predicament. If they had winked at Clinton's wrongdoing, as polls suggested they should, and settled for a bland censure of the president, the overriding Clinton factor would never have emerged. This would be a campaign about continuity, and Gore would win easily. "There are 13 people who are responsible for where we are now," a Bush adviser says. "They are the House impeachment managers." Reviled at the time by Democrats, pilloried by the media, scorned by Senate Republicans, they played a historic role, holding Clinton accountable, seeking just punishment, and, not least, shaping the 2000 race and paving the way for a likely Republican victory.

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors



Michael Ramirez

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America at War

What the attack on the USS *Cole* tells us.

BY TOM DONNELLY

THE DUST FROM THE RUBBLE of the Berlin Wall had barely settled when, in December 1989, George Bush inaugurated the post-Cold War era by sending thousands of American Rangers and paratroopers to Panama to arrest a petty tyrant and drug dealer whose thugs had threatened U.S. soldiers' lives. In the decade since, the frequency and duration of scattered U.S. constabulary missions abroad has increased dramatically—threefold, by Pentagon reckoning. But as the response to the attack on the USS *Cole* demonstrates, America's understanding of its new, quasi-imperial role in the world has failed to keep pace with events.

The immediate reaction to the bombing of the *Cole* was telling. President Clinton denounced a "cowardly act of terrorism." An American president these days has difficulty recognizing an assault on a U.S. Navy vessel in a foreign port for what it obviously is: an act of war. Almost anything short of a conventional armored invasion across an international border is now regarded as terrorism, ethnic cleansing, or even genocide—something entirely irrational, as opposed to a calculated political act. And the proper response to today's unconventional assaults is seen to be legal and moral: Terrorists should be "brought to justice" and ethnic cleansers made to stand trial in the Hague; our military forces should be employed in a disinterested, evenhanded way on "humanitarian" missions.

But lumping together the wide variety of unconventional attacks on Americans and U.S. interests under the rubric "terrorism" has created confusion. It has distracted attention from essential distinctions among types of terrorist acts. Some terrorist attacks—like that on the *Cole* or the bombing of the Khobar Towers barracks in Saudi Arabia in 1996, which killed 19 U.S. airmen—target U.S. military forces. Others—like the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993—target civilians, reflecting a different strategy on the part of the attacker. Some terrorist acts are the deeds of lone malcontents, like Timothy McVeigh or the Unabomber; others are part of a coordinated long-term strategy in pursuit of a political agenda shared by a broad-based and determined enemy.

Failing to see that we are at war, we also fail to see our enemies. President Clinton described those who attacked the *Cole* as "cowardly." In fact, their operation was clever and well planned, and it culminated in an extraordinary act of self-sacrifice and courage: According to news reports, the two commandos in the rubber boat stood to attention and saluted each other just before they detonated their explosives. If these had been Americans laying down their lives, their story would be fit for a John Wayne movie. Likewise, in the 1993 battle of Mogadishu that killed 18 Army Rangers and ultimately drove Americans out of Somalia, hundreds, if not thousands, of Somalis were killed and wounded.

Not only are these anti-American warriors brave, they are increasingly well organized, well armed, and well trained. "Globalism," it turns out, favors not only international businessmen, but also international drug lords and guerrillas. These may be "non-state actors," but they benefit from state sponsorship, and they can form alliances of convenience with governments hostile to the United States or simply take advantage of weak or failing states. New information technologies, along with old-fashioned weapons proliferation, make the resort to violence both tempting and effective.

Curiously, those most resistant to these lessons include the leaders of the U.S. armed forces, both in uniform and out. To them, constabulary duties are far less glamorous and honorable than the conventional wars they signed up for, and far more ambiguous. These missions do not take place on a well-defined battlefield and drive to a clear end. As a result, despite their frequency, the Pentagon has done almost nothing to adapt its operations, its forces, or its budgets to the new reality.

Our military leaders cling to the mantra that their job is to fight the nation's wars, the neat and clean conventional wars they prefer. And when, inevitably, there comes a Khobar or *Cole*-style attack, the Defense Department retreats into denial, blaming the catastrophe on an "intelligence failure" or on the need to accommodate the political sensibilities of our regional allies.

But there must be better ways of responding to these challenges.

The first step is to recognize reality, and that includes recognizing who we are. The extent of American power and reach today is without historical precedent. The collapse of the Soviet empire ushered in a truly "unipolar moment." The general peace and prosperity of the post-Cold War world rest upon our preeminence. By any measure of influence—political, military, economic, cultural—America stands alone.

Our very greatness, and the appeal of our principles rooted in our belief that every individual has inalienable political rights, pose a challenge to potential adversaries,

Tom Donnelly is deputy executive director of the Project for the New American Century.

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and leave them little means of striking back. A conventional war against the United States is a losing proposition, as Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic discovered. The alternative—terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and so on—can be effective in the short term and can sometimes even bring victory, as the North Vietnamese demonstrated.

As long as the unipolar moment lasts, then, unconventional attacks like that on the *Cole* or on the Khobar Towers or the ambush of the Rangers in Mogadishu will continue to punctuate the headlines. The American response to these acts of war should be to use the instruments of war—intelligence gathering and military force—not only to avenge them and deter similar acts, but also to frustrate the political aims of our enemies.

We are more likely to succeed if we see that there are lessons to be learned from the unconventional wars fought by great powers in the past. The lessons may not be pleasant, from the vantage point of our politically correct time. But we could do worse than contemplate the wisdom, for example, of Sir Garnet Wolseley, who helped enforce Queen Victoria's Pax Britannica. "In planning a small war against an uncivilized nation," said Wolseley, "your first object should be the capture of whatever they prize most, the destruction or deprivation of which will probably bring the war most rapidly to a conclusion."

Wolseley, like his contemporaries, was a man with few illusions, least of all that the cruel and bitter conflicts that marked his career were anything other than wars, and wars to be won. Nor did he doubt that there would be casualties—indeed, the history of the British army in his day is largely a tale of massacres suffered and avenged. Yet Wolseley, and his political masters, did not shy from playing the hand history had dealt them. In the process, they preserved their empire and secured decades of (mostly) peace and progress. ♦

The U.N. Also Rises

American power and Israeli security may never be the same. BY JOHN R. BOLTON

WHETHER LAST WEEK'S heralded Mideast summit will achieve either its immediate goal of ending violence in Gaza and the West Bank or its larger aspiration of reviving the "peace process" is unclear at the moment. What is clear, regrettably, is that a fundamental and perhaps irreversible shift in Middle East diplomacy has occurred. If sustained, this shift will weaken the hitherto preeminent role of the United States and ultimately imperil Israel.

One sign of this important shift is that the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, was a key player in advocating and fashioning the summit. As he did in his dealings with Iraq a few years ago, Annan assumed an increasingly powerful and visible role in the shuttle diplomacy that led to the summit. In Baghdad, he torpedoed the U.N.'s own weapons inspection efforts, almost certainly at the Clinton administration's bidding. His recent Middle East efforts, too, were doubtless supported, if not initiated, by the floundering Clinton team. This development is a striking, 180-degree shift from a decades-long bipartisan policy of keeping the U.N. out of Arab-Israeli diplomacy.

A second sign of this tectonic shift was the American failure to veto the U.N. Security Council's Resolution 1322, which did little more than blame Israel for the violence it condemned. The Clinton administration abstained from voting in an effort to signal to the Palestinians their commitment to being an "honest broker." But make no mistake, an abstention by one of the five permanent members is the functional equivalent of a "yes" vote, because abstaining allows a resolution (with nine affirmative votes) to be adopted. Permanent members cannot be neutral, whatever the view of Clinton's diplomats, as everyone else understood.

Third, the U.N.'s ill-defined consultative role in the post-summit investigative commission is a time bomb for Israel and its friends. Kofi Annan will apparently help pick commission members, and is entitled to comment on the report in draft. Moreover, the final report is to be published, but it is unclear to whom or for what purpose. In the current logic of international human rights, if there are allegations of "criminal" behavior, the inevitable next demand is for a special tribunal to prosecute and punish those who committed such offenses. What will the "honest broker" Clinton diplomats do then?

Fourth, ignoring the investigative commission set up by the Sharm el Sheikh summit, the U.N. Human Rights Commission met in a rare, emergency session, and found Israel guilty of "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity"—two of the Nuremberg offenses—in the "occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem." The commission, albeit on a very close vote, created its own "human rights inquiry commission" to do essentially what the Sharm el Sheikh body is to do. It unleashed no less than six special rapporteurs to conduct separate investigations, and it invited High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, for-

John R. Bolton is the senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute. During the Bush administration, he was the assistant secretary of state for international organizations.

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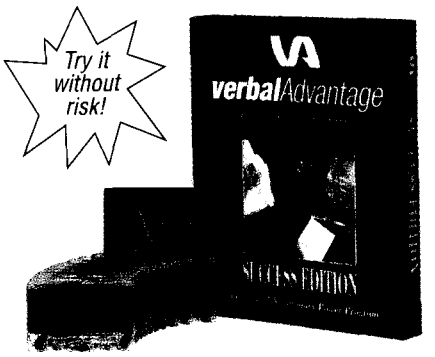

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mer president of Ireland, whose record of anti-Israel bias is near legendary, to grace the region with a visit. Thus, the commission, which is regularly unable to condemn human rights violations in mainland China or Cuba, handed Yasser Arafat what he hadn't won at Sharm el Sheikh.

Fifth, the U.N. General Assembly inserted itself into the complicated Mideast situation by considering a typically one-sided resolution. Doing so went against the U.N. Charter's own admonitions against assembly action in situations where the Security Council is engaged. Although the Bush administration succeeded in 1991 in repealing the assembly's despicable 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism, the General Assembly has remained an extraordinarily unhelpful place for U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East. Obviously the intent of what has been laughably called the "Parliament of Man" was simply to damage Israel, and inferentially the United States. Not even the Clinton administration could bring itself to defend this particular outrage.

President Clinton has tacitly encouraged reversing America's longstanding opposition to a major U.N. role in the Middle East. Why would he do so? The answer is that weakness in the president's personal position led him to reach out to whomever could "help," regardless of the larger consequences of doing so. Some ascribe this tendency to the all-consuming quest for a Clinton "legacy," and that is certainly a factor. But it is also evident that "assertive multilateralism," the original Clinton-Albright doctrine, has now emerged in the Arab-Israeli dispute. The secretary general, the Security Council, the U.N. Human Rights Commission, the General Assembly, and the yet-unborn investigative commission are all now loose in the field, in every case to the detriment of American dominance. Clinton himself will not have to personally bear the consequences of his ill-considered behavior, but his successor at the White House will face terrain much less favorable to the United States and Israel. ♦

Black October

The unreported attacks against the Jews of France.

BY MICHEL GURFINKIEL

Paris

ON THE RICHTER SCALE of anti-Semitism, France has just registered a major quake. From October 1 to October 18, in the space of just two and a half weeks, 6 synagogues were burned down and another 24 synagogues and Jewish schools were targets of attempted arson. Stones were thrown at people outside synagogues, and Jewish kids were hounded or molested on their way to school. There was even a rare shooting: On October 9, a sniper fired an M-16 automatic rifle into the Paris Great Synagogue during the Yom Kippur service. Fortunately, nobody was hit. The police quickly sealed off the Rue de la Victoire and searched the building from which the shot had come, but the sniper was gone, leaving behind only some shell casings.

Nothing like this has happened in Western Europe since World War II. To be sure, there are anti-Semitic incidents from time to time in most European countries—even occasionally lethal attacks on Jews. In France, two major anti-Jewish operations took place in the early eighties: a bombing at the Rue Copernic Liberal Synagogue in Paris in 1980, and a killing at the Goldenberg restaurant in the old Marais district in 1982. But these were clearly the work of an extremist fringe or of terrorists sponsored by rogue states. What is happening now is protracted domestic terrorism on a large scale.

Nearly all of the attacks have been carried out by Muslims. There are about 7 million Muslims in France—and fewer than one million Jews. Most of the Muslims are first or second generation immigrants from North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, or Turkey. Most are French citizens, either through naturalization or by virtue of their birth on French soil. Their numbers are growing, thanks to legal and illegal immigration and to a high birthrate. Most live in Greater Paris or big cities like Lille, Lyon, and Marseilles, where they make up between 20 percent and 30 percent of the population—and, more important, sometimes as much as half of the teenage population. In contemporary French parlance, the term "*les jeunes*" (young people) refers to this large cohort of predominantly Muslim Arab and black teenagers.

Most French Muslims are neither fanatics nor Jew-haters. In many neighborhoods, Muslim immigrants from North Africa have close dealings with Sephardic Jews of North African or Middle Eastern descent. And the principal organizations of the Jewish community (notably the Consistoire, a uniquely French body established by Napoleon, which represented Jews up until the separation of church and state in 1905 and still runs most synagogues; and CRIF, the French equivalent of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations) have long supported French Muslims' chief demands. These range from public funding of mosques and community centers to official recognition of Islam as France's second religion. Similarly, some moderate Muslims may express support for the Middle East peace process and show interest in visiting Israel or doing business with Israeli companies.

That said, there is also a fundamentalist element in French Islam, with links to organizations like the

Michel Gurfinkiel is editor in chief of Valeurs Actuelles, *a Paris newsweekly.*

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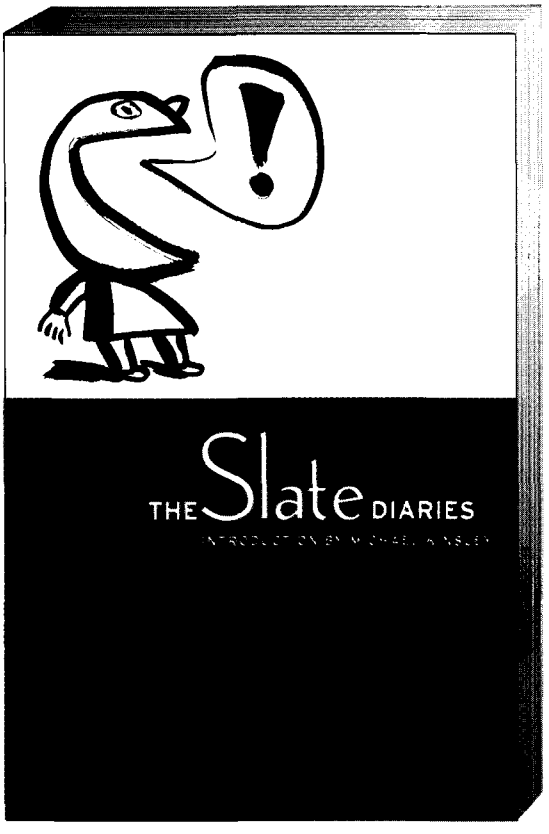

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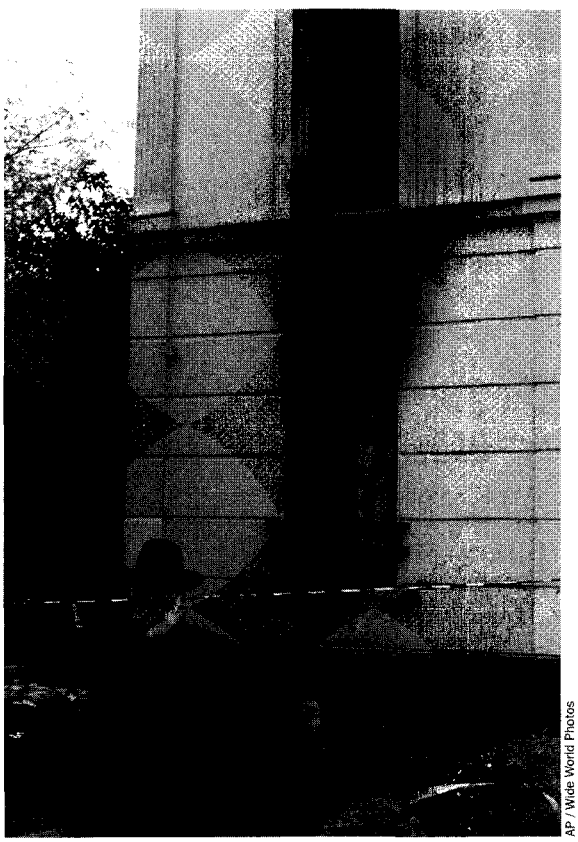
Muslim Brotherhood, the Afghan Taliban, and Usama bin Laden's group, and for this element, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are articles of faith. Moreover, its influence is growing. The radicals virtually rule the *cités*, the public-housing complexes where most low-income Muslims live. They manage most of the mosques. And they maintain symbiotic relations with an underclass of delinquent or semi-delinquent immigrant teenagers.

In 1995, the informal alliance of radical fundamentalists and lawless youths staged a brief wave of terrorist attacks related to the civil war then raging in Algeria; the Paris Metro was bombed, and an attempt was made to bomb the TGV, the high-speed railway. Most of the recent attacks on Jews have come from the same source. It is perhaps only natural that Muslim extremists and their friends in France—rejecting as they do any law other than Sharia, and steeped in the crudest anti-Israel and anti-Jewish rhetoric—should have reacted to the news of a revived intifada in the Middle East by attacking their own Jewish neighbors. One has only to sample the sermons of the Palestinian muftis and preachers—widely broadcast by satellite and quoted in print throughout the Muslim world, including France—to understand this. On October 13, for example, as synagogues were going up in flames across France, Dr. Ahmad Abou Halabiya, a Sunni theologian in Gaza, was reminding Muslims on Palestinian television that "Almighty Allah" desired them "not to ally themselves with Jews and Christians, not to love them, not to enter into partnerships with them, not to support them, and not to enter into any contract with them." He went so far as to instruct Muslims "not to pity the Jews but to fight them and to kill them wherever they are to be found."

For all their antipathy toward Jews, however, the radical Muslims of France probably would not have unleashed a pogrom without what they saw as the backing of the powers that be. The fact is that most of the political class in France has sided with the Palestinians in the current Middle East crisis. President Jacques Chirac, a conservative, blamed the Israelis for "deploying tanks against the feelings of a nation." Hubert Védrine, the Socialist foreign minister, who had previously called the policies of Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak "reasonable and realistic," nonetheless lined up behind Chirac, rather than with the more measured Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin. Pro-Palestinian activism was even more conspicuous on the far left, among the Communists, the Green party, the blue-collar unions like the C.G.T., the diehard Trotskyites, and even such "anti-racist" organizations as the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (League for the Rights of Man) and the MRAP (Movement Against Racism). There were many reasons for this sentiment. The French of every political stripe are broadly anti-American and have long resented Israel's special relationship with the United States. Also, ironically, some public officials and citizens who might otherwise have been supportive of Israel were persuaded to look kindly on the Palestinians by "peace-loving" and Likud-hating left-wing Israelis.



AP / Wide World Photos

A synagogue in the Paris suburbs after an October 13 arson.

As for the media, many of them mistook self-righteous agitprop for responsible reporting. This was true of both of the state-run TV channels, France 2 and France 3, as well as of the state-owned and state-controlled news agency, Agence France-Presse, and many privately owned dailies and magazines. Over and over, France 2 broadcast pictures of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy killed in a shootout between Israelis and Palestinians at the Netzarim junction near Gaza, pictures that made the Israelis look like cold-blooded murderers. France 3 showed Palestinian children and mothers taking pleasure in provoking Israelis and getting killed in the process, but commented only that "Palestinian resolve [had] not weakened."

The media also gave extensive coverage to pro-Palestinian rallies all over France, carefully editing out the fact that many of the demonstrators—a colorful mix of rank and file Muslims and far-left militants—were shouting, "Death to the Jews!" And the same media ignored or gave minimal coverage to a large pro-Israel rally held in Paris on October 10. It appears that Muslim fundamentalists, hearing from authoritative sources on all sides that Israel was very, very bad, failed to register that they were not thereby entitled to harm Jews.

But even more shocking than the violence itself has been the slow and

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embarrassed official reaction. It took the president and prime minister 12 days to issue statements. And even then, they refrained from the customary symbolic gestures, such as a visit to a burned synagogue or an address to the nation. This was a sharp departure from past practice. In 1982, after the killing at the Goldenberg restaurant, President François Mitterrand attended a service at the nearby Rue Pavée Orthodox synagogue. And in 1990, after the desecration of a Jewish cemetery at Carpentras in southern France (a shady business that may have owed more to satanism than anti-Semitism), both President Mitterrand and then leader of the opposition Jacques Chirac attended protest rallies. The French government's official reaction contrasted, too, with German chancellor Gerhard Schröder's response early this month to attacks on Jewish buildings in Düsseldorf and Berlin: Schröder promptly paid a visit to a synagogue.

Some of the media waited as late as October 15 to report extensively on the anti-Jewish violence. *L'Express*, France's widest-circulation newsmagazine, was still running an anti-Israeli cover on October 12, after a dozen synagogues and schools had been attacked. And when reporting finally began in earnest, most of it was biased. A common approach was to call the trouble "interethnic" or "interfaith" and to urge "both communities," Jewish and Islamic, to rein in their extremists, as if the incitement and assaults were evenly distributed.

None of this should be taken to mean, of course, that France is an incipient Fourth Reich. The government has, at long last, condemned the violence and taken steps to stop it. And the public, genuinely troubled, is demanding a more balanced approach to the Middle East crisis. A few political leaders have even started to question the country's pro-Arab stand. Still, the symptoms are alarming—both for French Jewry, and for France. ♦

The Gentlewoman From Florida

Corrine Brown would be easily reelected, if she hadn't broken all the rules. BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Orlando, Florida

"I'M STARTING OUT wanting to break the rules," said Florida representative Corrine Brown in 1992, one month after she was elected to Congress. Brown was of course joking, about her failed attempt to win coveted seats on three major committees—simultaneously. But she has broken the rules. Numerous times. And she broke several laws just to win that 1992 election.

"She's a crook," says Andy Johnson, Brown's 1992 primary opponent, who now supports her Republican challenger. "There are 50 reasons why the woman should be in jail. And I say this as an activist Democrat, a yellow dog who wants very badly to see a Speaker Gephardt after the election."

Brown's scandal-ridden record is one reason this surprisingly competitive race has gained notice. Another reason is that both Brown and her opponent, retired Navy lieutenant commander Jennifer Carroll, are black, while the Third District is majority white. Most important, this contest is one of about two dozen that will determine which party controls the House of Representatives. In theory, Florida's Third District should be a safe Democratic seat, but the incumbent's misdeeds and her opponent's impressive showing so far have Republicans talking upset.

The Third District looks like a jalepeño as it stretches from Jacksonville to Orlando. Gerrymandered to have a black majority in 1992, it was "corrected" in 1996 for constitutional reasons. Today, the district, one of Florida's poorest, is just 47 percent black. It is also heavily Democratic—having elected President Clinton by 23 points in 1996 and 27 points in 1992, the same year Corrine Brown was elected with 59 percent of the vote.

In that campaign, Brown disregarded or disobeyed numerous campaign finance laws by misplacing, misallocating, and misreporting tens of thousands of dollars. Among her violations: failing to report use of a corporate plane, using money from a nonfederal campaign account, accepting donations from foreign citizens, accepting donations from corporations, failing to account for numerous disbursements, and failing to report $81,000 in contributions before the election.

Just last month, Brown escaped punishment on bribery suspicions. After key witnesses fled the country, members of the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct concluded, "Representative Brown's actions and associations . . . demonstrated, at the least, poor judgment and created substantial concerns regarding both the appearance of impropriety and the reputation of the House of Representatives." The charges involved her lobbying of the Clinton administration and her congressional colleagues on behalf of Gambian businessman Foutanga Sissoko, who has been convicted of bribing U.S. Customs officials. Three months after Brown penned a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno to plead for leniency for Sissoko, her daughter Shantrel received a $50,000 Lexus from the chief

Stephen F. Hayes last wrote about the congressional race in California's Twentieth District for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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financial officer of Sissoko's company.

And there's more. So much more.

¶ She knowingly employed a convicted murderer on her congressional staff.

¶ She paid $5,000 to settle a dispute with the Florida Ethics Commission. She never admitted any guilt. But, as a state representative, she had, for three years, paid a state salary to a full-time employee of her travel agency. The employee, Betty Ann Howard, confirmed the charges.

¶ She paid a congressional salary to a "jazz singer" living in New York City. The singer admitted she had no legislative duties, but did sometimes travel to the district (at government expense) to sing to constituents.

¶ She claimed a tax exemption for a home outside her district, despite the fact that the Florida Constitution requires state representatives to live in the district they represent. Meanwhile, the exemption requires that the property be "occupied."

Though the details of Brown's history of malfeasance would fill this magazine, and take up much of the next issue, too, her opponent is reluctant to discuss it.

"People are just sick of hearing about it and sick of her playing the poor victim," says Jennifer Carroll. "I have received lots of positive feedback because I'm not dwelling on the negative." But pressed by an incredulous reporter, Carroll slips. "She really is a slime-bucket, isn't she?" she says. "She hasn't done crap for this district." Carroll looks like she wishes she hadn't said that.

Otherwise, one gets the feeling that Carroll works hard at making the right impression. At 41, she looks physically fit. Her hair is pulled back in a tight pony-tail and held up with bobby pins. Her pressed, light-brown, button-down oxford is tucked neatly into her dark brown trousers, just so.

She has a toughness about her, but exudes warmth as she shakes hundreds of hands with a firm grip and an engaging smile. The Orlando Federated Republican Women applaud wildly when she is introduced. (The ovation for Senate candidate and hometown congressman Bill McCollum is tepid in comparison.)

Corinne Brown

Carroll largely shares the conservatism of those in attendance. She favors partial privatization of Social Security, tax cuts, and some school choice plans. Recently, Carroll even advocated the elimination of the Department of Education, a position national Republicans—having failed to make their case persuasively—have shelved.

This is not the first time a conservative has run well in this district. In 1998, with the Sissoko controversy in the news, Republican candidate Bill Randall won 45 percent of the vote despite revelations that he hadn't paid $30,000 in taxes and that he had fathered a child out of wedlock. Clearly, there's a huge anti-Corrine Brown vote, and Jennifer Carroll is poised to benefit from it. "She's articulate, bright, and hard-working. She gives people a reason to vote against Corrine," says Florida GOP chairman Al Cardenas. "She's the perfect candidate."

Perhaps sensing this, Brown has so far refused to debate Carroll. On October 13, she skipped a debate sponsored by Channel 2 in Orlando in favor of a rally with "Shaft" singer Isaac Hayes. There are other ways to attack an opponent, of course. "Black Republicans are a freak of nature," Brown said when J.C. Watts came here to campaign with Carroll.

Freak or not, Carroll has proven herself as a fund-raiser, leading Brown by a 3-to-2 margin at the last FEC reporting period. What's more, some 73 percent of her contributions have come from individuals, while the bulk of Brown's money comes from PACs, including support from top House Democrats. Carroll currently has a $150,000 cash-on-hand advantage, though President Clinton has helped raise money for Brown since the September 30 report.

Nonetheless, Jacksonville mayor John Delaney and Orlando mayor Glenda Hood, both Republicans, have not endorsed Carroll. Though endorsements in general are of limited value, their decision to sit out the race is a blow, since together their cities account for approximately 50 percent of Third District voters. In a close race, Jennifer Carroll's promising political future could fall victim to their political timidity. ♦

Illustration by Jay Lincoln

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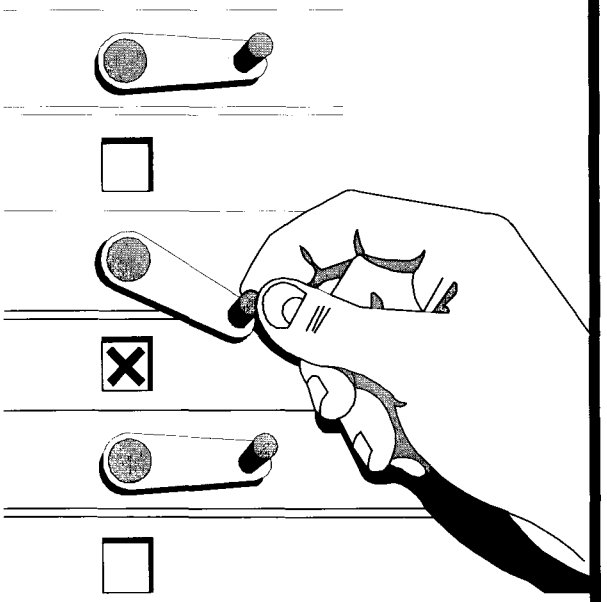

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- *In Florida one in three African American men has permanently lost the right to vote.*
- *In five states Iowa, Mississippi, New Mexico, Virginia, and Wyoming one in four black men (24% to 28%) have permanently lost the right to vote.*

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Sources: Fellner, Jamie and Mauer, Marc, "Losing the Vote: The Impact of Felony Disenfranchisement Laws in the United States (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch & The Sentencing Project, 1998).

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Don't Rock the Vote

There's a good reason Bush and Gore aren't panting after the "youth vote." BY EDMUND WALSH

WORLD WRESTLING Federation star The Rock has challenged George W. Bush and Al Gore to appear on the WWF's weekly *Smackdown!* program, watched, the organization claims, by some 14 million young voters. "You have approximately three weeks to decide to join us at *Smackdown!*," The Rock thundered a few weeks ago in Washington, "approximately three weeks to show that you do, indeed, care about the youth of America."

Forget the preposterous notion that candidates who can never stop talking about "the children" don't also care about "the youth." The Rock is going to get stood up for a better reason—he may have 14 million viewers, but it's highly unlikely even half of them will vote. And that's not the candidates' fault.

Both campaigns have made efforts to attract young voters. Each is blessed with an attractive young relative to rally the troops. Karenna Gore Schiff has traveled the country giving speeches on her father's behalf and imploring young people to go to the polls in November. Likewise, George P. Bush, the governor's nephew, has been trying to convince Gen Xers that his uncle is a new kind of Republican, more familiar with their issues than were the elderly GOP nominees of recent memory.

Proponents of targeted youth outreach whine that those efforts aren't enough. They complain that senior citizens command a disproportionate amount of the candidates' time and money, arguing that young people won't vote unless they're paid more attention. But that gets the cause and effect backwards: Candidates pay attention to groups who vote. The AARP crowd is fawned over by politicians because it reliably goes to the polls in droves.

In 1972, the first presidential election after 18 year-olds were given the right to vote, only 50 percent of young adults (ages 18-24) went to the polls. And the numbers have gone down ever since. In 1992, 43 percent of young adults voted, a post-1972 peak. (The third-party Perot excitement raised participation levels among all age groups that year.) In the 1996 election, when the outcome was a foregone conclusion, fewer than a third of 18- to 24-year-olds cast ballots.

The trends this year don't look any better. A poll commissioned by MTV finds that just a third of 18 to 24-year-olds plan to vote on November 7. That's probably a good thing, since the same survey indicates that 25 percent of young people can't name the major-party presidential candidates and 70 percent are unable to identify the running mates.

Meanwhile, the number of people over age 45 who vote has hovered between 65 and 70 percent in every presidential election since 1972. But while they would probably get one if they asked, senior citizens have never agitated for an "elderly debate" in Sun City. Like working mothers, union officials, and every other member of a sought-after demographic group, seniors watch the debates or nightly news programs to get information about the campaign. And if all else fails, they're inundated by ads.

In April, a "youth" group called Third Millennium released a report detailing the trends in political advertising throughout the 2000 primaries. The results were unsurprising. Evening news programs attracted the lion's share of advertising buys, followed by morning news and talk programs. Third Millennium's beef: Young people don't watch these shows enough, so they're not being exposed to the presidential race. Their preferred solution: Presidential candidates should spend more advertising dollars on programs that attract 18- to 34-year-olds, mainly sitcoms.

But that's just special pleading. Third Millennium's own research helps show why candidates don't do that. According to the group's Neglection 2000 report, "Of all the candidates running, it appears Bill Bradley was more willing to take chances on young adults with his ad buys." The problem is obvious. Bradley never came close to winning. Voters watch the news, and competitive campaigns know how to target voters.

Of course, Bush and Gore have both generated publicity by visiting late night TV shows, which attract predominantly young audiences. And Gore recently appeared on an MTV *Choose or Lose* special. But if MTV executives are really as concerned as they claim about politically educating young people, why didn't they air any of the debates this fall? Because, MTV vice president Stephen Friedman argues, young voters had "all these other venues" on which to watch the debate. And besides, "the debates are not the best way to" get young people involved in the process because "[the candidates] are not really speaking to their issues."

Really? Any young voter who watched the first two debates heard Al Gore's proposal to make up to $10,000 of college tuition tax deductible, and George W. Bush's plan to help young workers build private investment portfolios through Social Security. They would have heard both men discuss their views on abortion, the environment, and gay rights. In last week's St. Louis face-off, Gore and Bush specifically explained how they

Edmund Walsh is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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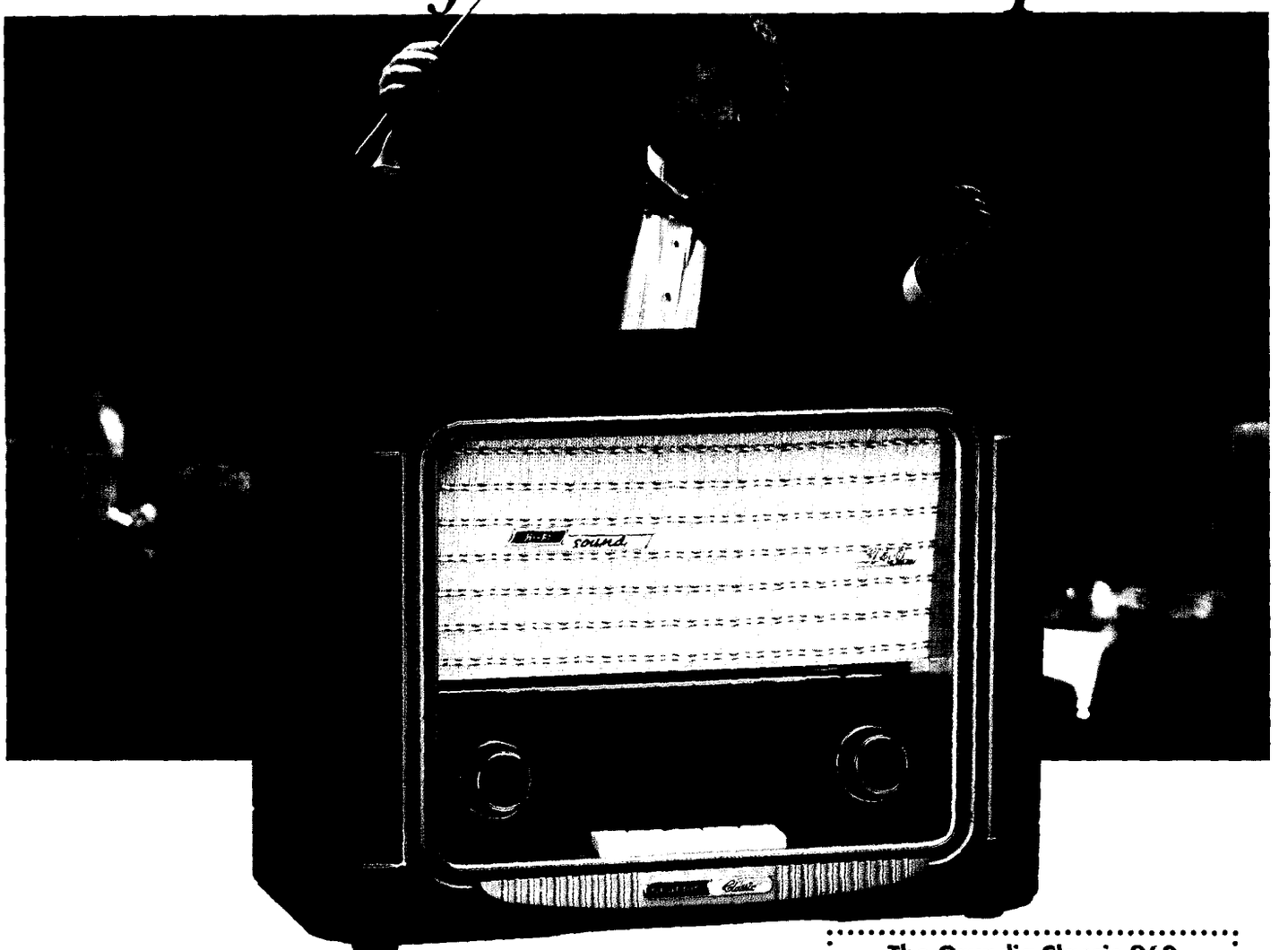

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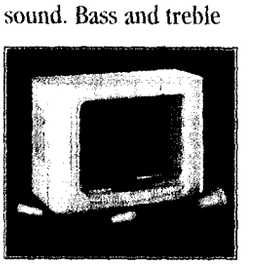

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would try to attract more young people to the political process: Gore through campaign finance reform; Bush through trust and civility. Friedman admits that these are exactly the kinds of issues Gore was asked about in his MTV appearance, but he insists there's still not enough emphasis on how policy proposals will affect young adults.

How much is enough? It's hard to avoid concluding that what the youth-vote lobby is really after is the kind of "attention" that translates into higher ratings and more political ad dollars for the likes of MTV and the WWF. If there really is a youth bloc worth extra attention from the candidates, young voters will first have to prove it by tearing themselves away from their TVs long enough to vote. ♦

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Arabs, Poles, and Other Key Voters

Ethnic "outreach" could decide who makes it to the White House. BY MATTHEW REES

IF GEORGE W. BUSH is elected president, he'll have many people to thank. One of them is Osama Siblani. During Bush's October 5 meeting with Arab-American leaders at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn, Michigan, Siblani told the Texas governor about two top concerns of Arab Americans: the use of ethnic profiling by aviation officials, which leads many Arab Americans to be held up for questioning at airports, and the use of "secret evidence" by law enforcement, which has led many Arab Americans to be wrongly charged as suspected terrorists. "This is an insult to our Constitution," Siblani says he told Bush, "and a scar on our civil rights."

Fast forward to the second presidential debate, six days later. Jim Lehrer asked Bush and Gore about racial profiling. Both condemned it, but only Bush said we've got to "do something" about airport profiling and the use of "secret evidence," which he said had unfairly demonized "Arab Americans." The comment received little attention in the post-debate spin. But among Arab Americans, who'd never before been singled out in a presidential debate, it was, as one political operative put it, "the shot heard 'round the world."

This is a big deal because Bush and Gore are tied in Michigan—where Arab Americans make up 4 percent of the electorate—and each needs the state's 18 electoral votes to win. Since Bush's comment has propelled him to near-mythic status among Arab Americans, his 12-point lead among them, 40 percent to 28 percent, could double. He's just won an endorsement from the Arab-American and Chaldean Leadership Council, an umbrella group of twenty Arab-American organizations, as well as the Democrat-leaning Arab American Political Action Committee and the Detroit-based *Arab American News*. According to Siblani, the paper's editor, "Bush has captured the hearts of Arab Americans."

That's bad news for Gore, who's so intent on winning Arab American votes he's retained James Zogby, a big shot in Arab American circles, to be his senior adviser on ethnic affairs. He's also issued some mild statements about violence in the Middle East, in hopes of not offending Arab Americans, and even consulted pro-Israel leaders beforehand to see how mild a statement they could tolerate.

But the balancing act failed. Not only does Gore have to deal with Arab giddiness over Bush, but also an energetic e-mail campaign that calls itself "Arab Americans Against Gore-Lieberman." The organizer, a 30-year-old Democrat named Ramzy Kanaan, launched the effort following the second presidential debate, to protest Gore's views on the Middle East. In just a week, Kanaan received over 8,200 favorable responses.

The net effect of all this activity could be to swing Michigan, and perhaps the election, to Bush. Then again, Arab Americans are hardly the only ethnic group being courted by the two candidates. In addition to the traditional outreach to blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, both campaigns are seeking the support of Americans who trace their ancestry to Central and Eastern European nations like Alba-

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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nia, Belarus, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine. The logic is simple. In swing states like Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, Central and Eastern Europeans represent between 12 and 18 percent of the population.

They are also thought to be up for grabs, as their views aren't a perfect fit for either party (largely Catholic or Orthodox, they tend to the right on social and cultural issues and lean left on economics). In years past they flocked to the GOP because of its anti-communism. But as the relevance of that issue has faded, they began voting Democratic again, to the great benefit of Bill Clinton, among others.

This year, neither Gore nor Bush has won their hearts, and there's been some grumbling from ethnic leaders that the outreach from both candidates has paled in comparison with other presidential campaigns ("worse than ever," according to Roma Hadzewycz, editor of the *Ukrainian Weekly*). The response over the past few months has been a series of gestures, most of them designed to portray Bush or Gore as an unswerving ally of "the old country."

Heading up the GOP's Central and Eastern European outreach efforts is Edward Derwinski, a former Chicago congressman who served as secretary of veterans' affairs in the Bush administration. Having been around ethnic politics in every presidential election since 1956, Derwinski says the Bush campaign is handling its outreach efforts as well as any presidential campaign he's seen, for the simple reason that it's "using fewer Washington phonies." He says the party's outreach consists of advertising in the ethnic media (television, newspapers, radio), both in English and the native tongue, and says he's been promised a "substantial sum" to make the ad buys.

The Gore campaign's efforts are led by Hady Amr, an Arab American who serves as national director for ethnic outreach. In addition to advertising in the ethnic media, which will be funded by the Democratic National Committee, the Gore campaign is also deploying surrogates like Health and Human Services secretary Donna Shalala, who's of Lebanese descent, and Dennis Kucinich, a Cleveland congressman who's part Croatian. Amr is also working with Tom Albert, the DNC's director of ethnic outreach, to put together members of each ethnic group and give them the campaign's imprimatur. One such group, recently formed, is "Croatian Americans for Gore-Lieberman."

Both campaigns are sponsoring events with representatives of these ethnic groups. On October 15, for example, roughly 150 people, representing a smorgasbord of Central and Eastern European countries, spent two hours in Cleveland's Hofbrau Haus restaurant listening to Ohio senator George Voinovich (Serbian-Slovenian) and Reagan secretary of state George Shultz (WASP) tout Bush and preview his foreign policy priorities.

A similar meeting was held two days earlier at the White House. Leon Fuerth, Gore's long-time national security adviser, spent 45 minutes with a non-partisan coalition of Central and Eastern European groups. Fuerth, according to someone who attended the meeting, was receptive to the coalition's call for further NATO expansion and additional assistance to Central and Eastern European nations. But like his boss, he was also deeply partisan, casting congressional Republicans as isolationist and even blaming them for a proposal by Maxine Waters, a liberal Democratic congresswoman, to steer foreign aid away from Europe and to Africa. (In July, Bush advisers Paul Wolfowitz, Robert Zoellick, and Stephen Hadley met with the same coalition.)

Americans of Polish descent make up the largest part of the Central and Eastern European mosaic, which no doubt explains Dick Cheney's Labor Day attendance at the Taste of Polonia festival on Chicago's heavily Polish northwest side. He danced the polka, served hot cabbage rolls, and delivered a speech in which he said meeting Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa was one of the highlights of his tenure as defense secretary. He closed by saying,

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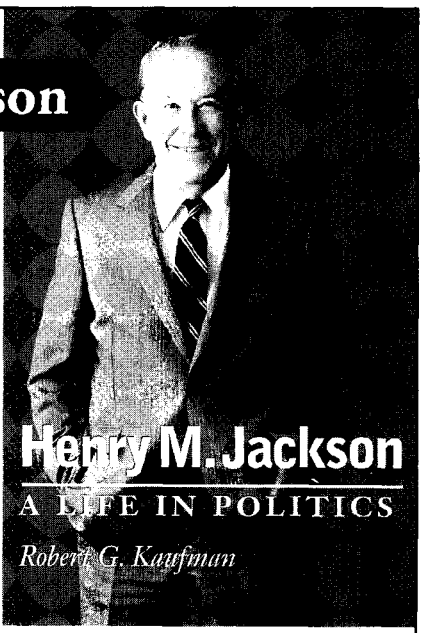

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"*sto lat*," a Polish toast which roughly translates as, "may you live 100 years."

Tipper Gore and Hadassah Lieberman also attended the Taste of Polonia, but whatever goodwill they earned was undone within days. On September 15, the American Center of Polish Culture held a glitzy dinner at Union Station in Washington to honor Walesa. Bush sent a letter, which was read aloud at the event, praising Walesa as a "true hero of democracy" and highlighting the "deep and abiding friendship" between the United States and Poland. Gore's campaign, by contrast, didn't respond to any of the four invitations it received to attend the dinner, a luncheon, or a church service, and didn't bother to send a testimonial letter either. Gore was in Washington the entire day. "Outrageous," says Kaya Mirecka-Ploss, head of the American Center of Polish Culture and a Democrat.

No matter how well Bush and Gore handle their outreach, they still face significant hurdles with certain groups. Some Ukrainian Americans are skeptical of Bush, for example, owing to his use of advisers who had a hand in his father's 1991 speech in Kiev, in which he lectured Ukrainians to avoid "suicidal nationalism" (perhaps to make amends, next week is "Ukrainian Culture Week" at the Bush Library in College Station, Texas). Similarly, a number of Serbian Americans told me that while they have mixed emotions about Bush, they will find it extraordinarily difficult to support Gore, given last year's bombing of Belgrade by the Clinton administration, and Gore's reliance on Richard Holbrooke for advice about the Balkans. That may explain why Cheney sat down for a fish dinner with eight Serbs at Serb Memorial Hall in Milwaukee on October 13.

But it's Arab Americans who must be Gore's biggest concern in the final two weeks of the campaign. He had a meeting planned with them for October 13, but canceled it to return to Washington when violence erupted in the Middle East. His campaign hopes the meeting will be held before Election Day. The sooner the better. ♦

Hate-Crime Laws: What's Not to Like

For starters, they are unnecessary and bad public policy. BY JACKSON TOBY

DURING THE SECOND DEBATE between Al Gore and George W. Bush, Gore criticized Bush for failing to support a bill that would have toughened the Texas hate-crime law. That measure—named after James Byrd Jr., a black man dragged to his death in Jasper, Texas—failed to pass. Bush defended the way Texas had handled the Byrd case.

> The three men who murdered James Byrd. Guess what's going to happen to them? They're going to be put to death. A jury found them guilty, and it's going to be hard to punish them any worse after they get put to death.

True, a toughened hate-crime law could not have added anything to the penalty in this case. But there are lesser crimes like assault or vandalism where hate-crime statutes can indeed add to the penalty. Moreover, additional categories of people can be protected. For example, the Byrd bill, which died last year in the Texas Senate, defined a hate crime as one motivated by the victim's race, ethnicity, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation. And the Hate Crimes Prevention Act co-sponsored by Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts and Republican Senator Gordon H. Smith of Oregon, which the U.S. Senate passed in July, would extend the scope of federal hate-crime protection beyond race, religion, and national origin to gender, sexual orientation, and disability.

Jackson Toby is professor of sociology at Rutgers University and was director of the Institute for Criminological Research at Rutgers from 1969 to 1994.

Democrats are more enthusiastic than Republicans about expanding the scope of hate-crime laws. President Clinton urged the House to follow the lead of the Senate. He said that making attacks on gays a federal hate crime was one of his legislative priorities. Hillary Rodham Clinton, in her race for a Senate seat in New York, told civil rights advocates on the New York City Hall steps on August 23 that the House of Representatives ought to pass legislation strengthening current laws against hate crimes. She accused her opponent, Rep. Rick Lazio, of not supporting the enhanced federal bill forcefully enough, which his campaign headquarters denied that same day.

Few politicians of either party are willing to declare that hate-crime statutes are simply bad policy. To say that sounds prejudiced. So 42 states and the federal government have now enacted hate-crime laws. Nevada, for example, adds 25 percent to a prison sentence for felonies judged to be hate crimes.

Toughening the penalty when anti-Semitism or hatred of blacks motivates an assault or a murder makes legislators feel virtuous. But such laws do not make sense as public policy for two reasons.

To begin with, they are unnecessary. As Bush pointed out in the debate, in the cases that arouse the most public indignation, conviction already results in very severe penalties: death or life imprisonment. But even with less serious felonies, like armed robbery, existing sentencing procedures already allow room for tougher sentences for more heinous crimes. Second, hate-crime add-ons increase the inefficiency of the crimi-

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nal justice system by wasting scarce custodial space.

Why the laws are unnecessary is fairly obvious. Criminal statutes are written with ranges of penalties, not ordinarily requiring a fixed term of imprisonment. The purpose of doing this is to give judges the opportunity to individualize punishments to fit both the crime and the criminal. Thus judges use their discretion to punish a professional armed robber more severely than the little old lady who gets the dumb idea of supplementing her pension by holding up a neighborhood bank. The judge does not discharge this difficult responsibility alone. He has a probation staff that investigates the offender's background and submits a pre-sentence report on the results of the investigation. When a legislature enacts a hate-crime punishment, on the other hand, it creates a one-size-fits-all penalty that ties the judge's hands once the jury comes in with a guilty verdict.

The second reason hate-crime laws are bad public policy is less obvious. A mandatory sentence for hate-crime offenders forces judges to incarcerate a particular category of criminal for a set period, which may well be longer than he thinks the offender deserves; this is inflexible and possibly unfair. Hate-crime laws leave less room in jails and prisons for others guilty of equally serious or worse misbehavior. A judge who has presided over hundreds of criminal trials for a variety of crimes is in the best position to decide how long an offender should be incarcerated in limited prison space. In many states, overcrowding has forced prison systems to release prisoners whom most citizens consider a public menace.

Two New Jersey cases that applied that state's Ethnic Intimidation Act illustrate both of these failings of hate-crime laws.

Case 1. Thirty-five-year-old Michael Melchione was sentenced on July 14, 2000, in Elizabeth to four years in prison, with no chance of parole until he serves two years, for throwing large rocks at several businesses in Elizabeth owned by Jews or having a Jewish clientele; he had also assaulted a Jewish woman. The Ethnic Intimidation Act overrode the discretion of the judge to take into account, in deciding on the appropriate punishment for Melchione's offense, the degree of viciousness he evinced, his previous criminal record, his employment and family history, and his illness (he is schizophrenic). Owing to his schizophrenia, Melchione may have been guilty of equal-opportunity misbehavior rather than targeting Jews in particular. Alan Silver, an assistant Union County prosecutor, said that without the element of religious bias, Melchione would have faced 180 days in a county jail or possibly probation.

Case 2. On June 26 of this year the U.S. Supreme Court, concerned about fairness, struck down part of New Jersey's hate-crime law in another case.

Even without special hate-crime legislation judges are unlikely to give lenient sentences for any crime that upsets the public.

Charles C. Apprendi Jr., a former pharmacist in Vineland, had gotten drunk and shot at the home of a black family in 1994. The Harrell family had just moved into a previously all-white neighborhood. No one was injured, but Apprendi received a 12-year prison term for his crime; the maximum possible sentence would have been 10 years had the judge not considered it a hate crime.

Apprendi had served five and a half years of his sentence when the Supreme Court decided that the Ethnic Intimidation Act should have allowed a *jury* to decide whether Apprendi had indeed committed a hate crime. Note that even after the Supreme Court decision, Judge Rushton H. Ridgway of State Superior Court could have imposed a 10-year sentence, the top of the range of penalties for possessing a weapon for an unlawful purpose. Yet Ridgway apparently had second thoughts about the severity of the penalty he had imposed in 1995. Instead of resentencing Apprendi to ten years, which would have been legal, he resentenced Apprendi, now 45, to seven years and urged the state parole board to take up Apprendi's case as soon as possible. The Cumberland County prosecutor is also supporting a request by Apprendi's lawyer that the board reduce Apprendi's sentence to time served.

Judge Ridgway did not explain why he was more punitive in 1995 than he was this year. The likelihood is, however, that he was responding to public and media indignation and to the pain of the victimized family. Crime victims are encouraged to express to the court their views on the appropriate sentence. The black family whose house was fired on understandably favored the severest sentence possible. Six years later the Harrell family still feels that a lesser sentence for Apprendi now would be "a slap on the wrist" given the pain he caused.

In the Melchione case, too, victims and victim-defense organizations pressured the court for harsh sentences. Charles Goldstein, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, was pleased by the four-year sentence given to Melchione. "This decision demonstrates unequivocally that those who commit bias crimes will go to jail," he commented outside the courtroom.

In short, even without special hate-crime legislation judges are unlikely to give lenient sentences within the range provided for the offense for any crime that upsets the public, as hate crimes do. When Victor Hugo said that an army could be resisted but not an idea whose time has come, he was thinking of a *good* idea. But the time can come for a *bad* idea too. Politically correct hate-crime add-ons are just such a bad idea. They are unnecessary and have served mainly to make the criminal justice system more unwieldy and less fair. ♦

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G-Men East of Suez

A serious anti-terrorism policy would unleash the military, not deploy the Justice Department

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

Imagine dirt streets and walled, stone walkways worn smooth by centuries of footsteps and weather. Imagine flat-roofed, mud-brick and cracked-cinder-block houses providing little comfort to an intensely tribalized, poverty-stricken people among whom communitarian spats and individual greed often translate into kidnapping, murder, and, on occasion, grenade-throwing and bombings.

Then imagine clean-shaven American suburbanites, moving in packs, decked out in khaki pants, top-siders, tennis shoes, and Ray-Ban sunglasses. Don't forget to hitch cell-phones to the Americans' belts and drape walkie-talkies around their necks. Don't forget the local guides and translators and, depending on the quarter and time, armed guards so the Americans don't get "lost" and can speak to the natives, who have rarely seen *Amrikiyyun* in such numbers.

This scene is probably pretty close to reality in Yemen, where hundreds of civilian and military investigators have descended since the USS *Cole* was attacked and nearly sunk by suicide boat-bombers in the port of Aden. The contrasting images ought to tell us that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is using a modus operandi in the Middle East that flouts common sense. More important, the FBI's methods reveal, again, the strategic vacuum at the heart of the Clinton administration's counterterrorist policies. Trying to arrest and prosecute terrorists—treating terrorism as crime—actually endangers American power overseas. Traditional realpolitik and gunboat diplomacy—the only meaningful responses to terrorists who kill Americans—gets cast aside in favor of far-off prosecutions that may well do more damage to America than terrorism.

One cannot but wonder whether FBI director Louis Freeh, who oversaw the investigation of the bombing of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, has forgotten the lessons learned when large numbers of FBI officials collided with a conservative Arab nation's security services. The Saudi Interior Ministry shut down the American side of the Khobar investigation. The Saudis would have probably blinded us in any case for political reasons, but the FBI's culturally insensitive and linguistically weak battalions (which even included female agents) rubbing shoulders with Saudi security men didn't help.

So far, the Yemenis appear to be cooperating. But we shouldn't conclude that Yemen, which has been fertile ground for a variety of radical Islamic groups and whose military and intellectual elites have had a long history of aligning themselves against American causes, wouldn't stifle or mislead us. Even if innocent, the Yemeni government could plant clues leading away from culpable Yemeni officials.

For example, the RDX plastic explosive used in the attack may possibly have come, one way or the other, from an official Yemeni source. Though not the exclusive domain of governments, plastic explosives in large quantities suggest that the terrorists' logistical supply chain somewhere had a knowing, official military source. Saddam Hussein, of course, or even Muammar Qaddafi, who bought a ton of Semtex from Communist Czechoslovakia and C-4 through rogue CIA middlemen, could have supplied RDX to the bombers, who were in all probability true-believing, radical Islamic types. Though tracing explosives is a very tricky affair, the Yemenis would be disinclined, to say the least, to allow us to assess their own supply of *plastiques*.

In other words, the U.S. investigation in Yemen is totally dependent upon the efforts and goodwill of the locals. The Yemenis will either round up all of the possible

Reuel Marc Gerecht is a former case officer in the CIA's clandestine service and the author, under the pseudonym Edward Shirley, of Know thine Enemy: A Spy's Journey into Revolutionary Iran.

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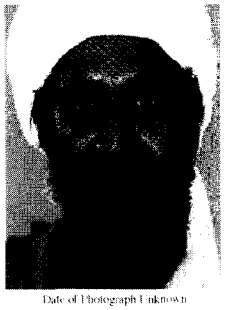
FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE

MURDER OF U.S. NATIONALS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES; CONSPIRACY TO MURDER U.S. NATIONALS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES; ATTACK ON A FEDERAL FACILITY RESULTING IN DEATH

USAMA BIN LADEN



Date of Photograph Unknown

Aliases: Usama Bin Muhammad Bin Ladin, Shaykh Usama Bin Ladin, the Prince, the Emir, Abu Abdallah, Mujahid Shaykh, Hajj, the Director

DESCRIPTION

Date of Birth:	1957	**Hair:**	Brown
Place of Birth:	Saudi Arabia	**Eyes:**	Brown
Height:	6' 4" to 6' 6"	**Complexion:**	Olive
Weight:	Approximately 160 pounds	**Sex:**	Male
Build:	Thin	**Nationality:**	Saudi Arabian
Occupation(s):	Unknown		
Remarks:	He is the leader of a terrorist organization known as Al-Qaeda "The Base." He walks with a cane.		

CAUTION

USAMA BIN LADEN IS WANTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE AUGUST 7, 1998, BOMBINGS OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSIES IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA AND NAIROBI, KENYA. THESE ATTACKS KILLED OVER 200 PEOPLE.

CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS PERSON, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FBI OFFICE OR THE NEAREST U.S. EMBASSY OR CONSULATE.

REWARD

The United States Government is offering a reward of up to $5 million for information leading directly to the apprehension or conviction of Usama Bin Laden.

www.fbi.gov

suspects and forcefully interrogate them, or they won't. They will either relay to the Americans what they have learned and solicit U.S. participation in the questioning of subjects and the analysis of collected information, or they won't.

It wouldn't be surprising, given the tribal, gossipy nature of Yemeni society and the toughness of the country's security service, if the Yemeni government were to crack this case in fairly short order. As the investigation progresses, it may be impossible for the United States to avoid annoying, if not infuriating, the Yemenis. Certainly, putting hundreds of American investigators, who know neither Arabic nor the country, on the ground is likely to cause problems while not advancing the quality of the U.S.-Yemeni investigation. Maintaining an effective relationship with the Yemeni security service and offering counsel and, if possible and appropriate, guidance to it isn't a labor-intensive endeavor. A handful of knowledgeable FBI and CIA officers ought to be able to handle the front-line work without suggesting an American invasion of a Muslim land.

But the bloat in the FBI's counterterrorist work isn't just a manifestation of the American bureaucratic ethic of overkill, which is really just the straightforward transfer of domestic FBI practices overseas. First and foremost, it springs from the Clinton administration's depoliticization of terrorism. Middle Eastern terrorism against the United States, particularly a kamikaze strike against a U.S. Navy vessel, is, from any angle, an act of war by unconventional means, as former secretary of the Navy John Lehman recently pointed out in the *Washington Post*. In the nineteenth century, when the Western world was graced with fewer lawyers, this would have been self-evident, not requiring a reminder from a historically minded former official.

The primary reason, of course, why the Clinton administration has made the Justice Department and the FBI the lead counterterrorist agencies is that doing so offers more foreign-policy wiggle room: We can blink in the face of a foreign threat and pretend we haven't.

As a case in point, let us look at Usama bin Laden, who, odds are, is with his buddies in the Egyptian Islamic Jihad lurking somewhere behind the bombing of the USS *Cole*. It's doubtful there are many souls left in the National Security Council, the Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency who really believe that bin Laden is just a "guest" of the Taliban. They may not fully appreciate how bin Laden has helped the Taliban define its own raison d'être and foreign aspirations, but they unquestionably know that if the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, really wanted to shut down bin Laden's operations or hand him to the Americans, he could certainly do so.

Yet we meaningfully threaten neither the Taliban nor the Pakistanis, who provide the Taliban with essential military support. (U.S. sanctions against Afghanistan, a war-shattered country with a virtually non-existent per capita income whose denizens excel at smuggling and the opium trade, are an oxymoron and thus don't count.) Mollah Omar and the Taliban are, by any meaningful definition, state-sponsors of terrorism.

The Pakistanis, if not state-sponsors, are sympathetic

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cousins who use Afghanistan and its para-military-cum-terrorist training camps for their own purposes in Kashmir. One would think—given bin Laden's terrorist actions in Africa, the repeated worldwide embassy alerts that Washington ascribes to the Saudi militant and his allies, and the eminence bin Laden has in America's multi-billion-dollar counterterrorist programs—that someone might seriously consider militarily retaliating against Mollah Omar and his close Afghan associates. We can find them, in Qandahar, Afghanistan—unlike bin Laden and company.

But the criminalization of terrorism allows timidity and caution in foreign affairs—always the bureaucratic default choice in American foreign policy—to hold the foreground. The strategic aspect to counterterrorism—incorporating America's fight against this or that terrorist into a larger regional game plan—haphazardly happens, if at all.

Given the Taliban's support of bin Laden and the Pakistanis' avoidance of the issue, one might think we would consider giving a sliver of our annual counterterrorism budget to the anti-Taliban forces of Ahmad Shah Masoud in northern Afghanistan. Masoud, the most accomplished of the Mujahedeen commanders of the Soviet-Afghan war, drives the Taliban and the Pakistanis nuts since they've been unable to conquer his domain. As long as he survives, the Taliban grip on Afghanistan could be cracked. Financial aid to Masoud would send a crystal-clear signal to the Taliban and the Pakistanis that America was displeased with their toleration, indeed encouragement, of bin Laden and his virulently anti-Western Islamic radicalism.

The State Department and the National Security Council, of course, cannot conceive of doing anything more forceful than utter reproaches and reprimands, which inevitably preface new appeals to the ISI, the Pakistani intelligence service with very close links to the Taliban, to do *something* about bin Laden. If bin Laden is discovered to be behind the attack on the USS *Cole* before January 2001, the Clinton administration, given the past, can be expected to fire more cruise missiles at tent and mud-brick Afghan training camps. CIA director George Tenet and his minions will complement the attack by leaking to the press that "we now have bin Laden in a box." Counterterrorism budgets in Washington will inevitably go up, further increasing the possible size of the next FBI-led team sent overseas to investigate a bombing.

Where the attack on the USS *Cole* may well lead us—and this is easily the most terrifying scenario—is to a courtroom in Holland. The continuing trial of Libyan intelligence officers for the bombing of Pan Am 103 is the logical end of the criminalization of terrorism. If the two Libyan officers are not convicted, which seems ever more likely, Muammar Qaddafi obviously wins. (The two gentlemen are, by the way, guilty as charged, even though proving that in a court of law may not be possible.) If the two Libyan officers are convicted, Qaddafi, who unquestionably authorized any actions by these Libyan intelligence officials, also wins since the U.S. government has already agreed to end the Pan Am 103 affair with this trial.

The only way we could ever make Qaddafi pay for blowing an American jetliner out of the air is through the use of military force. But the primary purpose of the criminalization of terrorism is precisely the avoidance of the use of force. Thus, the sponsors of terrorism, if they happen to be tough, rich, dictatorial rulers, have the happy prospect of eventually beating and embarrassing the United States in court. As our attention has been focused on violent events elsewhere in the Middle East, we haven't noticed that Qaddafi is on the verge of becoming, once again, a hero to the region's radical forces. Though we can probably rely on Saddam Hussein to trump Qaddafi as a rallying point for the Middle East's radicals, the Libyan's inevitable victory in Holland is likely to generate very unpleasant repercussions throughout the Middle East. We will probably rue the day that the Bush and Clinton administrations chose to prosecute Qaddafi's operatives instead of bomb him.

One can only hope that a Gore or Bush II administration will not repeat past mistakes. Yet the reluctance to use military force in the Middle East is clearly a bipartisan American reflex. The fear that serious military responses to terrorist attacks can lead to an endless series of attacks and reprisals is an understandable foreboding. But what ought to be clear is that whoever perpetrated the attack on the USS *Cole* isn't going to desist voluntarily. Two men vaporized themselves to express their hatred of the United States. By any true-believing standard, their act was a glorious success, quite sufficient to inspire others to follow. We cannot counter such determination and passion in a courtroom. We cannot counter it without demonstrating, as ancient Rome knew well, that there must be a frightful price for provoking a giant. Our enemies, and the friends of our enemies, must know that an easygoing, corpulent, wealthy Western nation is, when it wants to be, an indomitable, bloody-minded force that will seek awful vengeance upon its foes. ♦

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Smoke and Smearers

The Gore campaign has maligned the Bush environmental record.

By Christopher DeMuth & Steven Hayward

In the closing weeks of the presidential campaign, Vice President Al Gore is returning to the theme that Texas has become an abysmal place to live under Governor George W. Bush. It is a hard case to make—Texas is today the fifth-fastest growing state and fifth in net influx of Americans from other states, and Bush is one of the nation's most popular governors.

Gore's earlier attacks on the governor's education record were set aside following the release in July of a comprehensive RAND study showing that student proficiency in math and reading has been improving more in Texas than in any other state. His subsequent assertions about the number of Texans lacking health insurance seem to have fizzled as well (it turns out that the number of uninsured has been falling in Texas while rising in the nation as a whole). That leaves environmental quality, where the vice president and his ad writers have leveled a fusillade of dramatic allegations about increasing pollution in Texas's cities and streams. But the ecoscare attacks are as unfounded as the others.

Environmental quality presents rich opportunities for misleading data and rhetoric. Measuring air and water pollution involves a host of variables: One can measure pollution by emissions or by the quality of the air and water, and measurements of air and water quality depend on the placement of monitors, the use of peak versus average levels, and adjustments for population exposure and for the widely differing health and amenity effects of different kinds of pollution. Rankings of states are much more problematic than rankings for school performance or health care, because all states that are more urbanized and industrialized have higher pollution levels. Texas accounts for 60 percent of the nation's petrochemical production capacity and 25 percent of its oil refining, and it is the only state with two metropolitan areas among the nation's top ten (Houston and Dallas-Ft. Worth). Measured by simple gross quantities, Texas, California, and New Jersey will have "more pollution" than most other states under any circumstances; the rest of us can enjoy the products of their industries without having to bother so much with the pollution-control challenges.

Gore's charges exploit these opportunities to the hilt, combining misleading statistics with a few outright fabrications to create an impression that bears little relationship to reality. The charges, however, are easy to debunk, and it is surprising that they have been reported with little scrutiny by media that have otherwise grown wary of the vice president's loose ways with facts.

The Gore campaign's favorite charge is that Houston has passed Los Angeles to become "the smog capital of the United States," "No. 1 in air pollution," and "the dirtiest city in the nation." (We will ignore Democratic National Committee chairman Joe Andrew's claim that Houston has become "the dirtiest city in the world," which was evidently uttered in a fit of enthusiasm for the latest party line.) The charge is false. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, air quality in Houston is improving and is unambiguously better than in Los Angeles, and is also better than in many other cities.

The Houston charge is based on 1999 city data on ambient levels of ozone—one of six "criteria" air pollutants regulated under the national Clean Air Act—as measured by numbers of days of "exceedences" of the

Christopher DeMuth is president of the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C., and Steven Hayward is a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute in San Francisco. Both have advised the Bush campaign.

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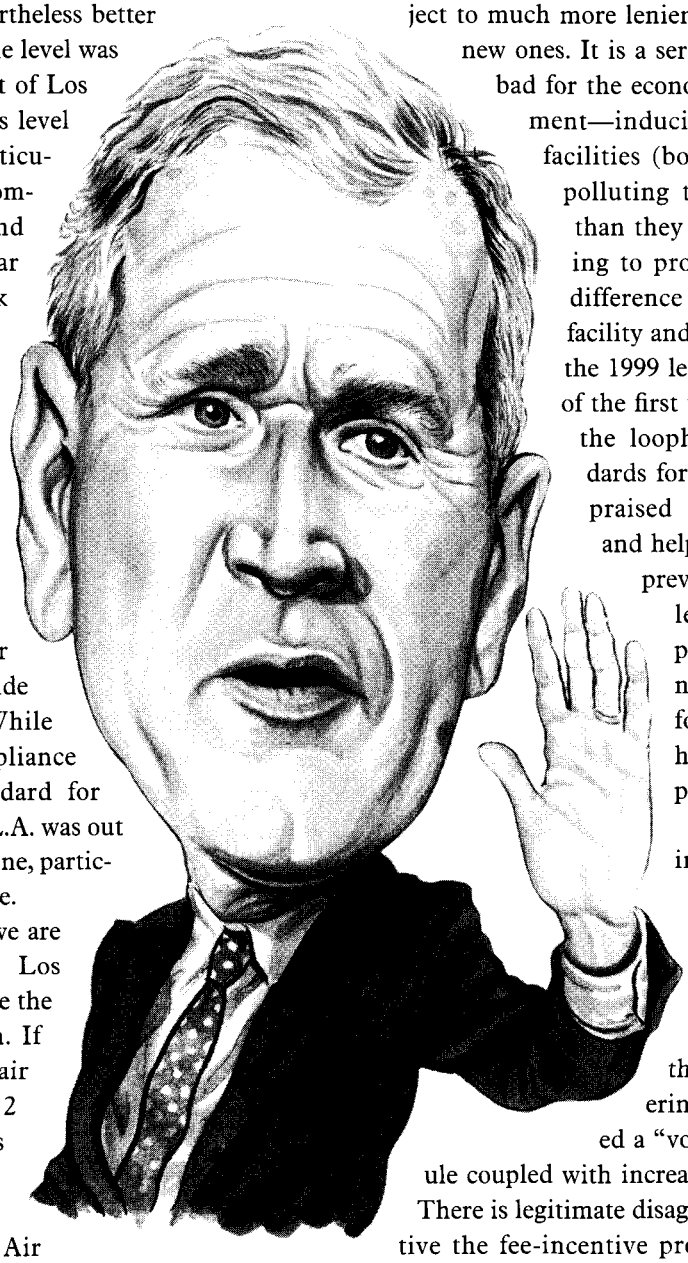
EPA's national standard. Ozone levels are highly sensitive to weather conditions, especially temperature. They have been essentially flat in Houston in recent years (and other southern cities such as Atlanta), but they fell sharply in Los Angeles in 1999 because of unusually cool summer weather. As a result, Houston topped Los Angeles (and all other cities) in ozone exceedences—but its air quality was nevertheless better than L.A.'s. Houston's ozone level was 10 percent higher than that of Los Angeles, but its particulates level was 20 percent lower (particulates are the other major component of "smog," and according to the EPA a far more serious health risk than ozone; there is no separate measure of "smog"). Houston did vastly better than L.A. for three of the four other Clean Air Act pollutants: 63 percent lower for nitrogen oxides, 64 percent lower for carbon monoxide, and 78 percent lower for lead (the cities' sulfur dioxide levels were identical). While Houston was out of compliance with EPA's national standard for only one pollutant, ozone, L.A. was out of compliance for three: ozone, particulates, and carbon monoxide.

We hasten to add that we are comparing Houston with Los Angeles only to demonstrate the falsity of Gore's allegation. If Houston is not No. 1 in air pollution, neither is it No. 2 or even No. 6 (Houston is the nation's sixth-largest metropolitan area). According to the EPA Air Quality Index, which aggregates levels of all six air pollutants and weights them according to the health risks of each, air quality in Houston is better than in ten other metropolitan areas. Houston also bests ten other cities on a separate EPA index of ozone alone. (These data are for 1998, the most recent year available; rankings for 1999 and 2000 will probably be similar.)



A related charge, and a particularly egregious falsehood, is Vice President Gore's assertion that Governor Bush "made key air pollution rules in Texas voluntary." In 1999, Governor Bush signed two laws concerned with "grandfathered" sources of air pollution. Under the Clean Air Act and almost all state air pollution programs, old power plants and industrial facilities are subject to much more lenient emissions standards than new ones. It is a serious loophole that has been bad for the economy as well as the environment—inducing firms to maintain old facilities (both less efficient and more polluting than new ones) for longer than they otherwise would, and leading to protracted litigation over the difference between renovating an old facility and building a new one. Under the 1999 legislation, Texas became one of the first three states to begin closing the loophole through tighter standards for old facilities. The step was praised by environmental groups and helped coax Gore, who had not previously confronted the problem as a legislator or vice president, to propose a national program of his own for old power plants. (Bush has also advanced a national proposal.)

But there was a wrinkle in the Texas initiative: The law covering utilities enacted mandatory standards (which will result in huge reductions in power plant emissions over the next three years), but the law covering industrial facilities enacted a "voluntary" compliance schedule coupled with increased fees for noncompliance. There is legitimate disagreement over just how effective the fee-incentive program will turn out to be; there have been some initial reductions in the first year, apparently of about 25,000 tons of air pollution, but it is too soon to estimate likely future reductions. What is not in dispute is that both the "mandatory" and "voluntary" prongs of the Texas program constitute an extension and tightening of air pollution controls—and an innovation that powerful business opposition has thwarted at the

Illustration by Drew Friedman

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national level and in most states. Nor is it disputed that the use of economic incentives rather than regulatory mandates may significantly improve the effectiveness of our environmental laws and deserves a try; indeed, that is precisely the approach of the vice president's national proposal for old utilities, which consists not of mandatory standards but of "voluntary" tax incentives.

For Gore—a self-described environmentalist and reformer—now to turn on the Texas reforms and describe them as having *weakened* pollution standards ("Bush made key air pollution rules voluntary") is an act of striking mendacity. Gore's latest campaign ad adds a particularly ruthless twist: It couples the "made voluntary" fabrication with the Houston air quality fabrication to produce a triple falsehood—that air pollution got worse in Houston *because* Governor Bush weakened air pollution standards.

The vice president's most plenary charge is that, under Governor Bush, Texas has become "last among all states in air quality," "No. 1 in industrial air pollution," and "No. 3 in water pollution." Although the Gore campaign has occasionally relied on newspaper articles and rankings produced by environmental groups, its primary and only official source for these claims is an EPA compilation called the Toxic Release Inventory. The TRI, however, is not a useful measure of air or water pollution and is not a measure of environmental quality at all. Instead, it measures "releases" of certain substances that the EPA classifies as toxic—and "releases" includes not only those that pollute the air and water but also those that conform with EPA-approved hazardous waste management and water treatment practices. The agency's annual TRI reports warn that its estimates "reflect releases and other waste management activities of chemicals, not exposures of the public to those chemicals," and that they are not sufficient to determine exposure or harm to the environment or public health.

So the TRI numbers cannot possibly support Gore's assertions. But even in their own terms, they tell a story that is the opposite of what the vice president would like voters to believe. Texas has always been near the top of the various TRI ratings, reflecting the state's huge share of national petrochemical and refining capacity. But it did not become No. 1 in the overall ranking under Governor Bush, as the Gore campaign insinuates. Rather, Texas was No. 1 under Bush's predecessor, Democratic governor Ann Richards, and it has improved significantly since he took office. The EPA's 1999 release of TRI data through 1997 noted that "Texas, the state with the largest production-related waste managed in 1997, was also the state projecting the largest absolute reduction . . . over the next two years." The data for 1998, released earlier this year, show Texas leading the nation in reduction of toxic releases—with 43 million pounds eliminated between 1995 (the first year Bush was governor) and 1998. The new report also finds Texas leading all other states in energy recovery and waste treatment, and second in on-site recycling. In part because of these improvements and in part because of improved nationwide reporting, Texas has now dropped from first to fifth place in the TRI composite index.

Environmental quality in Texas has improved under Governor Bush by virtually every useful measure. Here are a few selected statistics of our own: According to the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission, industrial air emissions in Texas fell 11 percent from 1994 through 1998. According to the EPA, ambient air quality in Texas improved for five of the six national air pollutants for the same period; all Texas cities but one now meet the national standards for four or more of the six pollutants (the exception, El Paso, receives cross-border pollution from Mexico); and half of Texas's cities are now below the national average for all six pollutants. According to the EPA, Texas's proportion of rivers and streams classified as "impaired" is better than the national average. And according to Environmental Defense, a research and advocacy group that has generally been highly critical of Governor Bush, Texas is not "No. 3 in water pollution" but No. 37—its water quality, as measured by percentage of substandard water under Clean Water Act criteria, is better than in 36 other states.

Governor Bush does not deserve all of the credit for this solid record; it is also due to the progressive tightening of national environmental standards and, perhaps even more, to progressive improvements in production technologies. But a share of the credit does belong to him, for his own decisions and those of his appointees. And in several critical areas of environmental policy, he has been a national leader—closing the old-plants loophole, redeveloping "brownfields" laid waste by the perverse incentives of the Superfund program, providing positive incentives to businesses for "pollution prevention" and to private landowners for conservation and species protection, and improving the financing of public parks and recreation areas. "Texas-style environmental regulation," which the Gore campaign invites us to fear, is, like Texas-style school reform, something Americans can welcome. ♦

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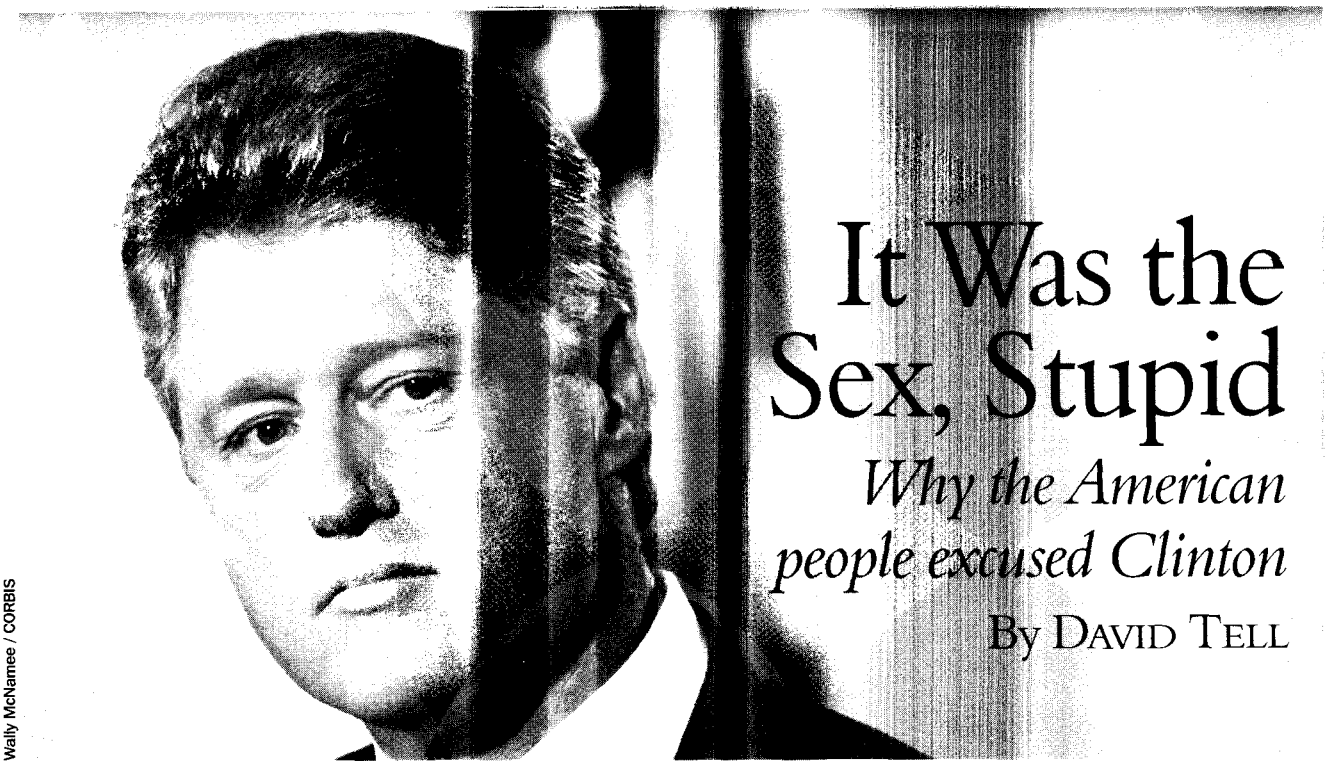

Wally McNamee / CORBIS

It Was the Sex, Stupid

Why the American people excused Clinton

By David Tell

A hundred years from now, there will be a scholarly consensus about the nature and course of public opinion during the Monica Lewinsky scandal. The story will go like this: First there were those five days in January 1998 when the country went almost blank with shock and we waited to see whether Bill Clinton wouldn't just concede disgrace and preemptively resign. After his famous finger-wagging denial, the answer was clearly no, and there followed a few weeks of active speculation over whether authoritative evidence from Kenneth Starr might—and ought—soon prove sufficient to drive the president from office against his will.

But no such evidence was forthcoming from Starr, until spring became summer became fall. And in the endless meanwhile, a majority of the electorate lost its appetite for the controversy and pronounced the judgment from which it never subsequently swerved: Clinton should serve out his term. Echoed in this verdict were bits of argument long advanced by the president's professional defenders: His accusers' motives were suspect, and their allegations did not warrant a major interruption in the cycle of American politics. The largest reason the public stuck with Clinton, however, was the understanding, developed over many months, that his had been merely a private error, a "lie about sex." Something of far less consequence, in other words, than his fulfillment of official responsibilities. Something, therefore, properly of little concern to *us*.

This is how the polls suggest America changed its mind about the scandal. This is how most of the chief combatants on both sides remember it. And so this is how we can assume the history books will someday read.

Sellout
The Inside Story of President Clinton's Impeachment
by David P. Schippers with Alan P. Henry
Regnery, 352 pp., $27.95

The Breach
Inside the Impeachment and Trial of William Jefferson Clinton
by Peter Baker
Scribner, 420 pp., $27.50

But there is a fundamental sense in which the history books will be wrong—for those memories are unreliable and those polling numbers deceptive. There is a sense in which America never changed its mind, slowly or otherwise. There is a sense in which the entire country operated from the start according to a single unconscious but central assumption: The president may sometimes be a felon and keep his job—if his politics are otherwise convenient to us or his felony somehow fails to spark our anger.

David Schippers, chief counsel to the House Republicans who led the Clinton impeachment, does not believe a presidential felon should ever keep his job. And he does not believe the American people disagree with him. His memoir *Sellout*, written with Alan P. Henry, is nominally an "inside" account of congressional activity following delivery of the Starr impeachment referral in early September 1998.

The book does contain some fresh detail. It turns out that right up to the point of her not unfriendly Senate deposition about the president, Lewinsky's lawyers withheld from her the fact that it was Clinton himself who had first and most persistently slandered her as an obsessional, threatening stalker. When Schippers attempted to clue her in, Lewinsky began to weep—and her lawyers quickly ended the interview. It also turns out that Juanita Broaddrick told House investigators Clinton raped her *twice* in 1978. As Schippers retells it: "Finally, the ordeal appeared to be completed. Clinton rose up slightly as though he were about to withdraw. Then he said, 'My God, I can do it again!' And he did."

These tales are news enough. And it is no serious criticism to report that *Sellout* hasn't too much other news to make. For Schippers is not primarily concerned to complete the documen-

David Tell is opinion editor of The Weekly Standard.

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tary record. He is concerned instead to tell us what he thinks it means.

In a roundabout but eloquent manner, he tells us he thinks the particular genius of our constitutional design is the restraint it erects between momentary popular sentiment and ultimate collective action. He tells us that it is this republican character that we are meant most to love in our national government—not so much what things the government does, but how it does them: the elaborate traditions and rules by which it is ordered, and the willingness of its officers to subordinate themselves to those traditions and rules.

So when the president has perjured himself in the government's courts—even in civil litigation, and even about sex—he has not made a discretely "private" mistake we may leniently weigh in the balance against his "official" performance. Obeying the law *is* the office—which means a lawbreaking president must no longer be tolerated, not for a minute. Schippers says all this and more, and gets quite worked up about it, too, as well he should, for it is the one true faith of American civil religion.

Trouble is, that seems to be a very lonely faith these days—an impression Schippers winds up inadvertently confirming by the very desperation with which he attempts to deny it. It cannot be that the Senate acquitted the president because it did not see the scandal his way, Schippers prays, for that would make the senators infidels and heathens—non-believers in America's civil religion. No, he decides, they must be *sinners*: men and women who knew full well what they should have done, and didn't do it. The Senate must have deliberately "betrayed" itself by denying House prosecutors a full opportunity to present evidence that would "prove the charges."

The logic is elusive. Prove the charges *to whom*? To Democratic senators who already knew the charges were true, as *Sellout* elsewhere makes plain, but who were determined to acquit the president anyway? That can't be right.

Nor can it be reasonable for Schippers to suppose that a full-scale trial would have produced a public outcry intense enough to turn the tide. Few crimes in history have been so widely and meticulously inspected as Bill Clinton's misdeeds with Monica Lewinsky. By the time Henry Hyde arrived in the Senate, any American who wished to know already knew. Another day or week or month of argument would have only made things worse. For what the polls missed, they missed. But what they caught was undeniable: Most people thought the president was guilty. Most people wanted him retained in the White House just the same. Most people were irritated with men like Schippers.

"I don't believe that," *Sellout*'s author announces defiantly on the book's penultimate page. "I believe," instead, that "the great unpolled American people knew" all along that he and his allies "were honorably performing their constitutional duty." Yes, well. Perhaps it's best we just draw the curtain on this good man, David Schippers, and wish him pleasant dreams.

In Peter Baker's fine new book *The Breach*, there is a scene one evening at the White House a few days after Monica Lewinsky has become a household name. President Clinton has invited some friends over for a private movie screening. But he is not there to greet them at the appointed hour; he has been delayed. Unperturbed, they use the wait to trade loud excitements about their host's spectacular new scandal. When the president finally does appear, all who notice fall awkwardly silent. But one oblivious woman gibbers on an extra, fatal moment, her words now audible to the entire room. "I would," she is heard to say to her companion. "Wouldn't you?"

Note this lady well, for while Baker makes very little of her, she may be the most important person in his book. *The Breach* is a serious first-draft history of the Lewinsky scandal's last six months or so, from the institutional perspective of major-party politics, and focusing largely, of course, on Capitol Hill. Baker's reporting is a helpful reminder of the cynicism with which leading Democrats responded to the president's Ken Starr problem. No Democrat featured in *The Breach* seems ever to have conceived the president's crimes as an *intrinsic* crisis of government. To his own party, Clinton's "unacceptable behavior" was unacceptable only insofar as it was a public relations threat to legislative plans and electoral fortunes.

But the Republicans, in Baker's reconstruction, made little better showing. The vast majority of them did of course vote to impeach or convict the president. But only a minority of that majority did so for the civil-religious reasons advanced by David Schippers. A fair number seem never to have been able to explain their votes at all. And their leaders seem to have analyzed Clinton's illegalities with one eye locked on electoral politics. Trent Lott, for example, settled Senate impeachment strategy with regular input from Frank Luntz, that noted constitutional scholar. Luntz, a pollster, thought impeachment was a "loser."

Both our parties, then, employed the same calculus in the Lewinsky scandal. Neither party thought the fact of a president's felonies alone was enough to determine that his useful service was at an end. Neither party remembered the purpose of American government.

Could ordinary Americans have remembered it for them? If not at the end, during the Senate trial, then maybe back in the first days, when the nation was still in shock and any result still seemed possible?

The answer, actually, is no. Look back at Baker's *faux pas* lady. She is a private guest in the White House, so she's no Republican. But neither is she any kind of Democratic foot soldier. Here it is, the very first week—while Clinton's party line remains that he scarcely even knew Lewinsky—and this woman already believes he's lying. She is an independent-thinking American Everywoman. And the crimes alleged against the president seem hardly to have penetrated her consciousness at all. She views the scandal as nothing more than a piece of unusually excellent gossip—about sex. *Vox populi*: "I would. Wouldn't you?" ♦

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The Tavern Scene from Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* (1735). Burstein Collection / Corbis.

The Moralist's Gamble

Can character be based on self-interest?

BY JONATHAN MARKS

Back in the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville praised American moralists for adjusting to the hard fact that in the democratic future, "private interest will become the chief if not the only force behind all behavior." By accepting the doctrine of self-interest, the moralist accepted modern individualism, confident of controlling it and using it to shape "orderly, temperate, moderate, careful, and self-controlled citizens."

Today, too, many commentators on American civic morality believe that individualism can be directed onto a virtuous path, building out of our private choices a moral character for the nation. But the individualism of Tocqueville's time is nothing compared with the individualism of our own. And in *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil*, James Davison Hunter concludes that the moralist's gamble has failed: "Character is dead. Attempts to revive it will yield little. Its time has passed."

The Death of Character
Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil
by James Davison Hunter
Basic Books, 352 pp., $26

Hunter is a professor of sociology and religious studies at the University of Virginia and directs the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. He is perhaps best known for making the phrase "culture wars" ubiquitous and even respectable with his 1992 book, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. That book's success owed much to Hunter's rare ability to engage our most heated controversies seriously and passionately but without rancor. He knows how to support bold and surprising conclusions with measured and fair-minded observations that few can dismiss.

The Death of Character addresses the question of how we can order our lives in late modernity, whose conditions are singularly inhospitable to moral certainties and the institutions that transmit them. Hunter uses the moral education of children as a window into the moral world of adults, and his claim that America is failing at character education will surprise almost no one.

It will come as a surprise, however, that Hunter does not round up the usual suspect, moral relativism, to explain this failure. He emphasizes instead the sincerity of our character education efforts. "About 85 percent of all public school parents want moral values taught in schools," and in response, state departments of education have earnestly set about defining the "core values" that schools should teach. Institutions devoted to character education proliferate on both the left and the right.

The problem, Hunter claims, is not moral relativism but moral fragmentation: "We Americans see all around us the fragmentation of our public life, our increasing inability to speak to each other through a common moral vocabulary." Our condition is, in large part, the product of "sociological and historical" causes: Any number of large, impersonal forces—multinational capitalism, pluralism, social mobility, and popular culture—have made it impossible to maintain moral meaning. Character has died, in spite of our best attempts to save it, because its cultural preconditions have disintegrated.

To help, we have called in the psychologists. "When it comes to the moral life of children, the vocabulary of the psychologist frames virtually all public discussion." In our fragmented moral culture, psychology is a natural authority because it appears to speak not for any one moral position but for science. Psychological pedagogy reflects and reinforces a series of changes in our moral culture that have been underway for a long time: from

Jonathan Marks is a visiting assistant professor at James Madison College at Michigan State University.

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authority to autonomy, from appeals to God and the community to appeals to the needs of the self, and from talk of right and wrong to talk of what is useful for self-esteem.

The emergence of therapeutic culture and the shift from theistic and republican to the utilitarian and expressive are admittedly old, old tales. Hunter, however, offers a sometimes very amusing demonstration of the pervasiveness of what he calls the psychological regime. "Do a weekly inventory of positive traits you see in yourself" and "Become your best friend": The source of these suggestions is not Barney the purple dinosaur but Charles Gerber, the evangelical author of *Christ-Centered Self-Esteem*. Even the famously out-of-step Boy Scouts are not immune. Their "Learning for Life" curriculum offers this justification for making moral decisions: "We feel good about ourselves, others feel good about us, and we don't have to worry about negative consequences." There are many reasons to be critical of the psychological regime in character education, but Hunter offers the most devastating: It doesn't work.

There has been some backlash against the psychological regime, but Hunter does not think such a backlash can resurrect character. Communitarians are right to attack the radical individualism of the psychological regime. Indeed, Hunter draws on their view that "individuals are social creatures inextricably embedded in their communities," so that identity and morality must be grounded in "shared ideals, sacred obligations, and collective memories." But character, Hunter argues, cannot grow in abstract communities that make no one uncomfortable.

Similarly, "neoclassical" critics like William Bennett and James Q. Wilson are right to insist that character development requires the support of powerful stories that fill the moral imagination of children. But the neoclassicists, too, neglect particularity, claims Hunter. They seek to cultivate a kind of universal, or "natural" morality that can be teased out of the Western experience and parts of the non-Western experience, too. But even if educators succeed in finding any common Judeo-Catholic-Protestant-Greek-Roman-European-American-Chinese morality, Hunter argues, it is bound to consist of "the thinnest of platitudes."

Morality and character are always rooted in a shared culture, in common institutions, traditions, stories, and memories. But contemporary America no longer has a robust common culture—and "there have never been 'generic' values." Character education that attempts to found itself on the morality that all Americans share inadvertently empties character of meaning. We had better abandon the quest for an inclusive American moral vocabulary and instead "create greater space in our public culture for different moral communities to exist."

Hunter rightly faults the communitarians for wanting exalted virtues without strong communities, but it is not so clear that he scores against the neoclassicists. Unlike the communitarians, thinkers like Bennett and Wilson are not inconsistent when they advocate morality without advocating the distinctive communities Hunter champions. Where the communitarians tend to look down on such "bourgeois virtues" as thrift, industry, diligence, and self-discipline, Hunter's neoclassicists tend to be most concerned with precisely these low but solid virtues, so closely connected to self-interest. Since they do not ask for very exalted virtues, it may be enough for them to concern themselves with families, neighborhoods, voluntary associations, and the religion, however thin, that many Americans share.

All the same, it is hard to be as confident as Tocqueville was in self-interest rightly understood. Individualism has advanced against all the institutions that Tocqueville depended on to restrain it. Whatever the encouraging recent signs in our leading moral indicators, one does not have to be a pessimist to wonder whether today's American cultural soil is rich enough to support even the bourgeois virtues. We are hardly in a position to dismiss Hunter's suggestion that it is time to face the death of character. ♦

Racing in Place

John McWhorter issues a strong challenge to Black America. **BY ROGER CLEGG**

The importance of John H. McWhorter's new book, *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America*, is difficult to overstate. It's thesis is straightforward and explosive: The principal hurdle faced by African Americans today is their own culture. McWhorter identifies the three major self-destructive elements of that culture as victimology, separatism, and anti-intellectualism. After devoting a chapter to each, he shows how together they have resulted in African Americans' taking untenable positions on two particular issues, affirmative action and ebonics.

A thirty-four-year-old associate professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, McWhorter has written four other books, but they are specialized works, focusing mainly on language. Now, in taking this shockingly strong stand on perhaps the most divisive issue in America, he is showing extraordinary bravery.

In *Losing the Race*, he points out the way in which victimology blames white racism for black problems and "inherently gives failure, lack of effort, and even criminality a tacit stamp of approval." Because of the "Cult of Vic-

Roger Clegg is general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity in Washington, D.C.

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timology," writes McWhorter, "it has become a keystone of cultural blackness to treat victimhood not as a problem to be solved but as an identity to be nurtured." Though he generally praises Shelby Steele's *The Content of Our Character*, he disagrees with Steele's analysis of victimology as "a conscious manipulation strategy." Rather, says McWhorter, it is a "subconscious psychological gangrene" that "infects our whole culture, not just the power seekers."

Separatism is a direct product of victimology, and it causes "a restriction of cultural taste, a narrowing of intellectual inquiry, and most importantly, a studied dilution of moral judgment." By labeling as "white" the mainstream culture, separatism "alienates many black people from some of the most well-wrought, emotionally stirring art and ideas that humans have produced, miring the race in a parochialism that clips its spiritual wings." So too separatism results in the "ghettoization" of black academic work, downplaying "logical argument and factual evidence in the service of filling in an idealized vision of the black past and present, which is founded not upon intellectual curiosity but upon raising in-group self-esteem."

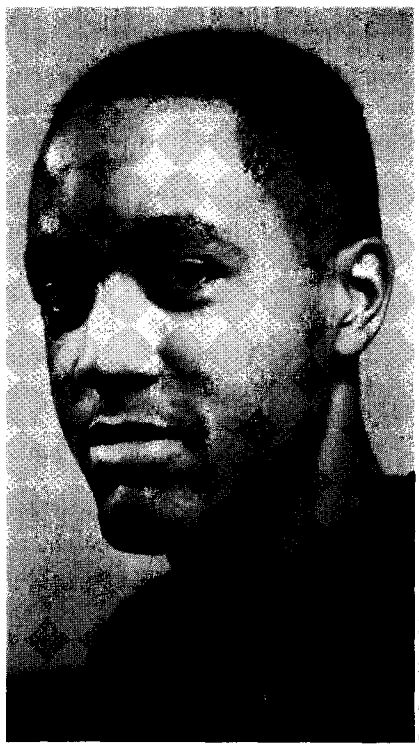
But the "most crippling symptom" of separatism is its conviction that black people "cannot be held responsible for immoral or destructive actions." Separatism reinforces the "dumb black myth" and "is a drag on hiring and career advancement."

In his discussion of black culture's anti-intellectualism, McWhorter marshals the statistical evidence of black underachievement in academics, reinforcing it with disturbing incidents involving black students in his own teaching career.

He concludes: "The sad but simple fact is that while there are some excellent black students, on the average, black students do not try as hard as other students."

And that is because "all of these students belong to a culture infected with an anti-intellectual strain, which subtly but decisively teaches them from birth not to embrace schoolwork too wholeheartedly."

Academic excellence, in other words, is seen as "acting white." A "wariness of books and learning for learning's sake as 'white' has become ingrained in black culture." This is indeed cultural, not racial, writes McWhorter, pointing to the marked differences between newly immigrated black Caribbeans and native-born African Americans.



Free Press / Jane Scherr

Losing the Race
Self-Sabotage in Black America
by John H. McWhorter
Free Press, 256 pp., $24

McWhorter's writing is epigrammatic but also anecdotal, frequently drawing on his own experiences as teacher and student. He grew up in a middle-class suburb of Philadelphia, and that middle-class background is important. Throughout *Losing the Race*, McWhorter stresses that the viruses he has identified have infected African Americans at every socioeconomic level. He emphasizes "the little-noted fact" that "middle-class black students tend to make substandard grades even in well-funded suburban schools where teachers are making Herculean, culturally sensitive efforts to reach them."

In a concluding chapter, he declares that the day has come in which African Americans "must be treated as equals, and we must allow ourselves to be treated as equals." For that, blacks must abandon victimology and acknowledge that success is now the norm for them, that occasional inconvenience is not oppression, and that race hustlers like Al Sharpton are to be rejected. He also calls for a rejection of affirmative action in higher education (although, unpersuasively, not "in the business realm").

In a stirring call to action in the last three pages, McWhorter asserts, "I am not alone," and he asks "those black Americans who find themselves unable to identify with the self-indulgent theatrics now forced upon us by whites and blacks alike to come out of hiding and start speaking up for real progress."

McWhorter does not deny that racism still exists. He rejects many conservative arguments against affirmative action, lists Spike Lee as one of his favorite movie directors, and is "an avid supporter of Black English." He rejects the liberal mindset here—with its condescension and lower standards—on account of his racial pride, not because he lacks it.

Losing the Race is important not only because it is powerfully argued and correct in its diagnosis and prescription. Multiracial and multiethnic relations are in general remarkably rancor-free in America—except as regards African Americans. Even here, there has been enormous progress in a very short period of time. For that progress to continue, however, social pathologies that disproportionately affect the black community—illegitimacy, crime, substance abuse, poor academics—must be corrected. It is becoming increasingly clear that this correction cannot be simply imposed from without but must be advocated from within. And for taking up the challenge, John H. McWhorter is to be loudly and gratefully applauded. ♦

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Bad Ideas Matter Most

Heather Mac Donald's account of how intellectuals have damaged America. BY PETER SAVODNIK

Heather Mac Donald's *The Burden of Bad Ideas*—a collection of the brilliantly researched magazine essays she has produced in recent years—accomplishes two important objects: It establishes the connection between theory and practice in some of America's most respected institutions, and it makes clear that the theory in question, the central "bad idea" from which all the other bad ideas come, is basically good, old-fashioned leftism. It may have died in the Soviet politburo, but it lives on in America's colleges, policy think tanks, science foundations, and arts organizations.

The Burden of Bad Ideas
How Modern Intellectuals Misshape Our Society
by Heather Mac Donald
Ivan R. Dee, 242 pp., $26

The Burden of Bad Ideas opens with an investigation of the great philanthropies. Until the late 1960s, Mac Donald observes, these foundations—Carnegie, Rockefeller, Ford, Mott, Mellon—devoted their resources primarily to founding universities, hospitals, libraries, museums, and concert halls. The message they conveyed was clear: The more fortunate would help the less fortunate by extending previously out-of-reach opportunities to them. "Opportunities" is the key word. The tycoons who founded these philanthropies understood the difference between giving people a chance and giving them a handout. "One man or woman who succeeds in living comfortably by begging," Andrew Carnegie claimed, "is more dangerous to society, and a greater obstacle to the progress of humanity, than a score of wordy Socialists."

But in the early 1960s, things suddenly changed. Starting with the Ford Foundation's "Gray Areas" project, created by Harvard social theorist Paul Ylvisaker, the large foundations embarked on a more radical program: Instead of making room for more people to take part in the American experiment, the philanthropies sought to change the experiment itself. No longer should the less privileged seek mobility and success. They should instead seek to bring down the "power structure," as Mobilization for Youth, a federally funded juvenile delinquency agency, recommended. They should seek "advocacy" and "empowerment" by way of "community action" and "collaboratives" to overthrow the racist, sexist, and classist edifice upon which America had been founded.

As Mac Donald's essays move from topic to topic, she discovers the same pattern across America's elite institutions. The Ivy League universities, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the New York State Regents, the *New York Times*, and the Smithsonian prove no better (and, in some cases, much worse) than the once-great philanthropies.

The reigning orthodoxy of progressivism at these institutions turns out to be that tired, old revolutionary theme of transforming traditional values and the existing political-economic-cultural regime. This 1960s radicalism, cloaked in establishment garb, has fueled any number of disastrous programs, initiatives, and "advocacy organizations"—each of which has succeeded only in sowing new divisions in the already frayed social fabric.

In a particularly pointed essay on education schools, "Why Johnny's Teacher Can't Teach," Mac Donald takes aim at the ideas pouring out from Columbia's Teachers College: "critical-thinking skills," "community-building," "brainstorming," "student-centered learning," and the rejection of "content-based" curricula. As Mac Donald points out, "For all the ed school talk of freedom from the past, teacher education in this century has been more unchanging than Miss Havisham. . . . Since the 1920s they have not had a single new idea; they have merely gussied up old concepts in new rhetoric, most recently in the jargon of minority empowerment."

The subjects covered in *The Burden of Bad Ideas* are, you would have thought, prime material for hungry reporters looking for exposés to write, but nonetheless Heather Mac Donald has been almost alone in covering them. In her introduction, she says that she had an advantage over other journalists, since she "came to writing about urban problems and social policy an innocent, without a preconceived theory about the neighborhoods that have dominated domestic policy debate for almost half a century now." This is a tad disingenuous: Mac Donald wrote most of the twelve essays in her book for *City Journal*, which is published by the right-leaning Manhattan Institute; certainly her editors at *City Journal* didn't send her out onto the streets of New York hoping she would find just anything.

But what they were hoping she'd find, she did. The hugely wasteful social-engineering experiments of the 1960s and 1970s and on to the year 2000 have wrought, and continue to wreak, widespread havoc on the people least able to defend themselves against the well-funded programs of America's radical establishment. ♦

Peter Savodnik is a staff writer at the Daily Progress *in Charlottesville, Virginia.*

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Never a Contender

Just another liberal movie.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The brilliant British actor Gary Oldman is not only a star of the new political thriller *The Contender*, but an executive producer. Oldman's manager, Douglas Urbanski, is another of the movie's producers. And they're both outraged by the finished product, which should give you an idea of the meaninglessness of those endless credits moviegoers are forced to sit through. That may be the only valuable lesson taught by *The Contender*—except, of course, for the lesson we learn almost every time a picture deals with Washington: Stay home.

Off-screen, Oldman is a Thatcherite conservative, and in *The Contender* he plays a conservative congressman who goes to war against a Democratic White House. The vice president has died, and the president (Jeff Bridges) appoints a personable female senator named Laine Hanson (Joan Allen) to the second-highest office in the land. Already the movie is on shaky ground, because the House of Representatives has no role in such confirmations. There are dozens of comparable inaccuracies in *The Contender*, and writer-director Rod Lurie makes the mistake of trying to explain them away with incomprehensible expository dialogue. It all gives *The Contender*, which begins smashingly, a weird and uncertain tone.

The only coherent element is the movie's ideological slant. The consistency of its left-wing message is what has outraged Oldman and Urbanski, who say that when *The Contender* was filmed, it was far more evenhanded. But, they insist, after DreamWorks Pictures became its distributor, *The Contender* was cut by Lurie—following the orders of DreamWorks honchos Steven Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and David Geffen, all prominent Democrats and Clinton intimates—into a piece of blatant rabble-rousing that casts Oldman's character, Shelly Runyon, as a pure villain in the moustache-twirling tradition of melodrama.

Runyon is supplied with photographs of a college orgy in which Hanson supposedly participated twenty-five years earlier, which he leaks to a website modeled on the Drudge Report. Hanson angers the White House chief of staff by refusing to answer questions about the matter. "It's beneath my dignity," she says, and suffers quietly as the public humiliation grows.

Oldman thought his character was a tragic hero: a flawed but morally upstanding spokesman for traditional values honestly disgusted by what he believes to be Hanson's libertinism. In the movie we see, however, Runyon is motivated by equal parts spite (he was the Republican presidential candidate defeated by Jeff Bridges), misogyny (he tries to order for Hanson in a Capitol lunchroom), partisan animosity (Hanson changed party affiliation from the GOP), ideological sanctimony (he is a rabid pro-lifer), and personal preference (the other candidate for the vice presidency is his old friend). There is nothing even remotely admirable about this man.

Hanson, by contrast, is some kind of saint. Her refusal to speak about the orgy is portrayed as unyielding principle, especially when we discover that it never happened. What we do learn is that she was party to adultery: She embarked on an affair with her future husband while he was still married. That, too, is portrayed as a noble act: "I plead guilty to falling in love," she says while apologizing for the pain she caused her husband's wife.

This is the movie's rankest absurdity. The adultery took place only seven years before and was mentioned in court papers. There is no way such a liaison would remain secret in the real world, and even in our age of loosened morals no way that it would not be a public scandal. But this is a Hollywood fantasy about Washington, and in Hollywood, adultery isn't given a second thought—or even a first thought. The movie concludes with not one but two of those inadvertently hilarious speeches the movies love to put in the mouths of its dream politicians. Hanson tells Runyon's committee that she wants to protect government from the depredations of religion, remove all guns from all American homes, but beef up the military to fight terrorism. Later, the president appears before a joint session of Congress, berates Runyon publicly, screams about partisanship and hate, and is greeted with a standing ovation—in which join, presumably those Republicans he has accused of "hate."

Oldman's anger has caused a stir in Hollywood. A DreamWorks publicist acknowledges that the initial version of *The Contender* included more material on Oldman's character—but that cut was more than three hours long, while the final version clocks in at a far more reasonable two hours and six minutes. *The Contender* could have run ten hours and still Oldman would have been mistaken. The idea that a modern Hollywood might give a conservative Republican congressman a fair shake was delusional from the get-go. Oldman believed Runyon was a hero because he agreed with the character's views and he was playing Runyon. But Lurie could never have intended anything other than to show Runyon as a monster.

The whole business is reminiscent of the greatest of all acting jokes: An actor is cast in the role of Bernardo, the smallest part in *Hamlet*. "I've never seen *Hamlet*," his wife says. "What's it about?" And the actor replies, "It's about this guy Bernardo." ♦

A contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *John Podhoretz is a columnist for the* New York Post.

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Parody

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Who's got the nicer car?
Whose accent is funnier?

Wolf Blitzer Tried to Force Me to Decide (By a Girl Who Can't Say No—or Yes Either!)

MACOMB COUNTY MOM'S SHOCKING CONFESSION
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Engineering Mediocrity

Shelby Steele is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution

That old saying "Watch out, you may get what you ask for" is beginning to haunt those of us who have long hoped for an end to racial preferences. **The vast and subtle apparatus of preferential policies called affirmative action still has a vigorous life in American institutions and workplaces.** Even in places such as California, where group preferences have been outlawed in state institutions, they manage to have an active underground life. Yet now they also have a foredoomed quality about them. State ballot initiatives and a series of circuit court and Supreme Court decisions have made the point that both the wider public and the Constitution are against them.

If preferences themselves now seem doomed, the impulse that generated them in the first place is alive and well. This is the impulse to engineer an appearance of racial equality rather than develop a true equality based on a parity of skills between the races. Since the 1960s American institutions have been under pressure to prove a negative: that they are not racist and do not discriminate against minorities or women. The impulse behind racial preferences is essentially an expedient that allows institutions to win their moral legitimacy as nonracist institutions whether or not the formerly oppressed achieve an actual parity of skills.

The mechanism by which racial preferences engineer "inclusion" is a tolerance of mediocrity in minorities—allowing mediocrity to win for them what only excellence wins for others.

But attacks on preferences have focused more on their unfair racial exclusivity than on the social engineering by which they function. Now that they are losing favor, we are seeing a new generation of engineering schemes that achieve "inclusion" by extending the tolerance for mediocrity—bringing in more black and brown faces without reference to their race.

What might be called "X percent plans" are an example. California, Texas, and Florida now guarantee university admission to the top 4, 10, and 20 percent, respectively, of all high school graduates. In a segregated state such as Florida, this brings in more black students to the University of Florida because it makes 20 percent of the students in inner-city schools eligible where previously only a small percentage were eligible.

This "raceless" engineering tolerates more mediocrity and relies on segregation to capture the black and brown faces that bring moral authority. It injures these universities more than traditional affirmative action because it extends the tolerance of mediocrity to great numbers of whites in order to get more blacks and Hispanics. Once these flagship state universities are diminished, won't the white flight that happened in K–12 education extend to them? Won't private colleges and universities—where the tolerance of mediocrity can be isolated to minorities—gain prestige at the expense of these public institutions?

If the era of affirmative action is creeping toward an ignominious end, one of its lessons is that **racial disparities ought never be occasions for social engineering.** Absent a hard-earned parity of skills and abilities between the races, "inclusion" is necessarily a corruption.

— Shelby Steele

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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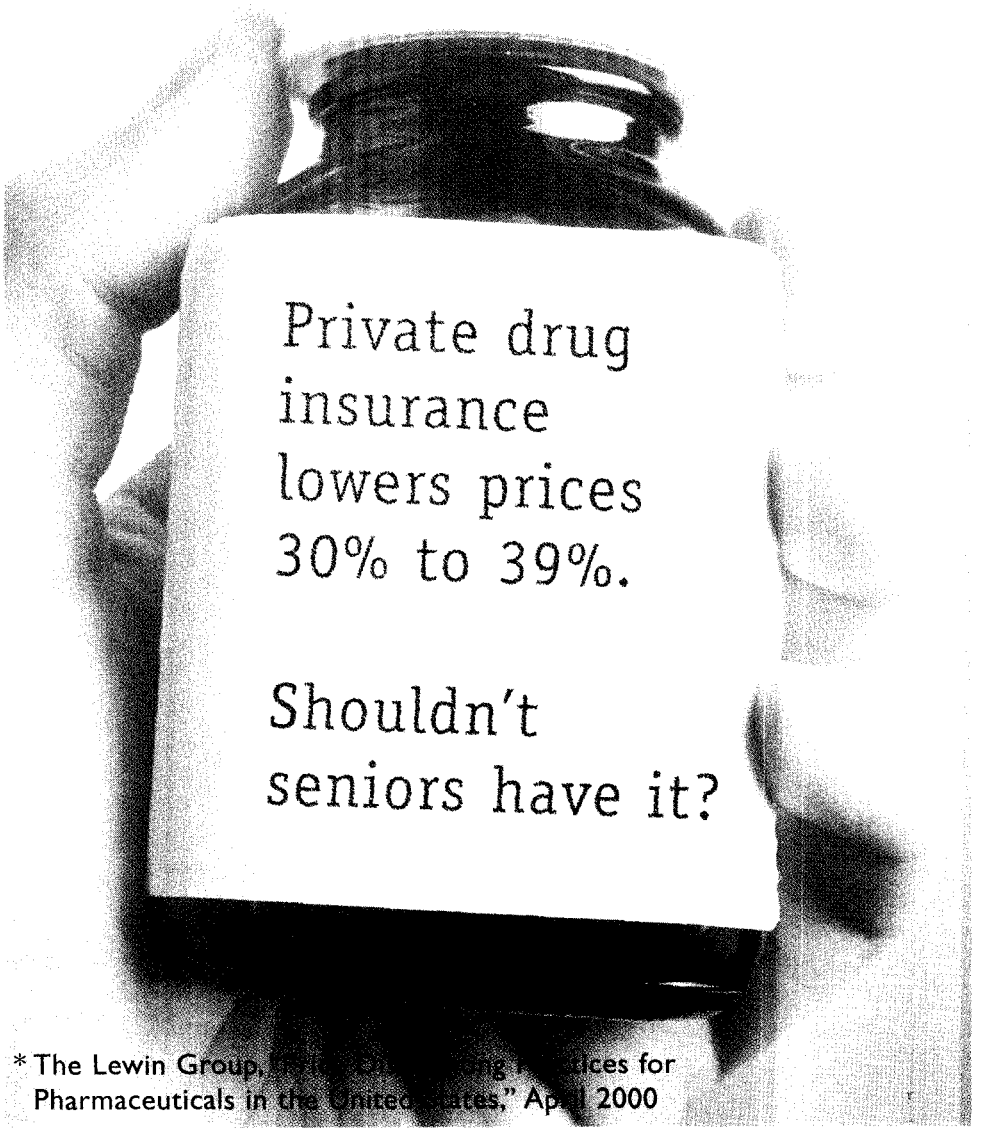

* The Lewin Group, [illegible] Prices for Pharmaceuticals in the United States," April 2000

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